United Nations

E/C.19/2006/6/Add.7

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 March 2006
English
Original: English/Spanish

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fifth session
New York, 15-26 May 2006
Items 3 and 4 of the provisional agenda*

Special theme: Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples

Ongoing priorities and themes

Information received from the United Nations system

United Nations Population Fund

United Nations country team in Ecuador

I. United Nations Population Fund

[Original: English]

Summary

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supports initiatives to promote the respect of human rights, including the reproductive rights, of indigenous peoples. At the country level, programme activities include the development of quality and culturally sensitive reproductive health information and education services with the full participation of indigenous peoples to ensure that the services respond to their needs and respect their rights. At the regional and global levels, UNFPA has contributed actively to the process for establishing and supporting the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

* E/C.19/2006/1.

06-26833 (E) 050406 060406

A. Response to the recommendation of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to the United Nations Population Fund

1. In compliance with the recommendation, in Ecuador, in November 2005, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and Family Care International assisted the local indigenous non-governmental organizations Jambi Huasi and the Ministry of Health to hold an international seminar on intercultural perspectives for maternal health, with the purpose of promoting the inclusion of an intercultural perspective in health policies relating to reproductive health. The seminar witnessed the sharing of experiences with representatives of other countries such as Bolivia, Panama and Peru.

B. Response to the recommendations of the Forum to bodies of the United Nations system in general

1. All United Nations system bodies should recognize that indigenous cultures are intrinsically connected to indigenous peoples' traditional territories

2. The mission of UNFPA is guided by the programme of action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development and international and regional human rights instruments. According to the programme of action, Governments should respect the cultures of indigenous people and enable them to have tenure and manage their lands, protect and restore the natural resources and ecosystems on which indigenous communities depend for their survival and well-being and, in consultation with indigenous people, take that into account in the formulation of national population and development policies.

3. All UNFPA programmes concerning indigenous rights recognize the linkages among human rights, population dynamics, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. In particular, UNFPA, using culturally sensitive approaches, strives for the protection of human rights of vulnerable populations (including indigenous peoples), the empowerment of women in order to reach gender equality and equity and a comprehensive approach to reproductive health. UNFPA also takes into account various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds.

2. The concept of development needs to be revised, taking into account full participation, rights and traditional knowledge-practices of indigenous people

4. UNFPA emphasizes the importance of human rights, cultural values and their linkages with population and development, including democracy and good governance, in all policies and programmes. It stresses the need to respect cultural values in the design and implementation of its assistance to activities and in its partnership with key national and international institutions.

5. UNFPA supports initiatives to promote the respect of human rights, including the reproductive rights, of indigenous peoples. At the country level, programme activities include the development of quality and culturally sensitive reproductive health information and education services with the full participation of indigenous peoples, to ensure that the services respond to their needs and respect their rights. At

the regional and global levels, UNFPA has contributed actively to establishing and supporting the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

6. In Brazil, a study was carried out by the Universidade Federal do Amazonas, with the active participation of the native Brazilians themselves. The report was a preliminary analysis of the living conditions of approximately 8,500 indigenous people who live in 91 Sateré-Mawé settlements (approximately 1,600 families) along the shores of major rivers and creeks of the Andirá-Marau area.

7. On the basis of the above-mentioned study, the university, with the support of UNFPA and UNICEF, published *Sateré-Mawé. The Portrait of an Indigenous People* in 2005. The book documents the low quality of prenatal services, the low coverage of birth registration and the gradual disappearance of the Sateré-Mawé language.

8. The study also highlighted the high illiteracy rates, the massive adoption of non-indigenous religions, the economic importance of the production and trade of guarana (a coffee-like stimulant) for the Sateré-Mawé's subsistence, the significant migration to urban areas, the end of fishing as a traditional activity and the gradual changes in economic dynamics throughout the indigenous territory.

9. Perhaps the most significant impact of the sociodemographic diagnosis has been the increased knowledge and space for the critical reflection it has provided of Sateré-Mawé culture by the indigenous people themselves. The Sateré-Mawé, who participated actively as interviewers in the study, are now involved in raising awareness of its results. The report will also be translated into the Sateré-Mawé language, thus becoming accessible to many indigenous chieftains, teachers and health providers, thus furthering a process of change from within.

10. In Ecuador, UNFPA and other United Nations bodies work together to reduce inequities and exclusion related to ethnic issues and have made explicit efforts to introduce an intercultural perspective in their country programmes and projects. An intercultural theme group, chaired by UNFPA, has been created in order to link such a perspective to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (see sect. II below).

11. The theme group undertook a mapping exercise in order to identify the national institutions that implement programmes that benefit indigenous peoples and the needs and interests of indigenous organizations. A document on the relevance of an intercultural perspective was adopted by the United Nations country team. As a follow-up, the team has invited different indigenous leaders to make recommendations for more relevant United Nations assistance. The theme group continues collaboration with indigenous organizations and assists them in the dissemination of information and special celebrations.

12. In addition, in coordination with UNDP and the human rights institutional strengthening project of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in 2005 UNFPA supported the preparation and participation of an indigenous delegate in the Forum.

13. In Panama, UNFPA supports the Ngobe people in promoting and advocating their right to health (including reproductive health), education and development, in general, and assisted other United Nations bodies in the establishment of a bipartite council on indigenous issues that would participate in Government decisions

regarding indigenous peoples. UNFPA has also assisted a council of indigenous women of Panama in promoting venues for women's participation in indigenous and women-related affairs.

14. In Paraguay, UNFPA is carrying out a study on the theme "Reproduction anthropology, Mbya humanity", which includes a description of the experiences of the Mbya in sexual and reproductive health care, their myths and culture. Community participation, especially that of Mbya male midwives and traditional women midwives, is being incorporated into the study.

3. Government policies and programmes to safeguard indigenous peoples' equal right to education should be promoted as good practices throughout the United Nations system and Governments should adopt further special measures on education

15. The elimination of gender disparity in primary education is one of the indicators of gender-related Millennium Development Goals. In the UNFPA multi-year funding framework, gender equality and empowerment of women make up one of the main goals. In the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development, State representatives also agreed on the need for primary education for both sexes and the elimination of gender disparity in enrolment rates.

16. In order to promote gender equality in education, UNFPA has been encouraging countries to adopt gender-sensitive curricula in primary and secondary schools. As a result, many countries have developed materials and curricula related to gender equality and gender-sensitive reproductive health issues and have trained teachers for that purpose.

17. In Bolivia, UNFPA activities have focused on improving the sexual and reproductive health of indigenous people within the framework of a law on education reform. For many years, UNFPA has supported a project aimed at providing literacy skills in Quechua and in Spanish, with information on health and reproductive health and gender equality, which has benefited more than 120,000 indigenous women. The geographical area of the project is located in the departments of Chuquisaca, Potosí and Cochabamba, where female illiteracy reaches 50 per cent.

18. The project implements activities to teach indigenous women in Bolivia how to read and write in Spanish and Quechua within the framework of their own sociocultural realities and concerns, with contents that promote human rights (specifically reproductive rights), safe motherhood, violence prevention and gender equality and equity. The main result of the project has been the empowerment of indigenous women and a reduction in maternal mortality in project areas. Partnerships with other organizations offer income-generating activities to ensure better results, and continuity of the learning centres has been assured. The project has emphasized the respect for traditional values and beliefs, promoting the relevance of cultural diversity, participation and dialogue.

19. In Brazil, the research study carried out by the Universidade Federal do Amazonas had a significant impact on education, since the results pointed to problems and difficulties faced by the Sateré-Mawé. Thanks to the study, indigenous teachers and leaders will be better equipped to negotiate better conditions with official institutions. The information is also important for indigenous schools.

Moreover, a simplified version of the report is being developed and translated by native Brazilian teachers so that the Sateré-Mawé children can learn about their culture.

20. As regards the survival and recovery of the Sateré-Mawé language, research results are having an impact not only on native Brazilians, but also on governmental and non-governmental institutions, since they measure the degree to which the language is being lost in cities and in the indigenous areas inside the Sateré-Mawé territories. To address that trend, Sateré-Mawé teachers will be hired and culture centres will be created in indigenous areas as a means to implement actions to revitalize the Sateré-Mawé language and culture.

21. The low number of birth registrations revealed by the study, especially on indigenous lands, has raised discussions among Sateré-Mawé leaders, who now are able to pressure governmental institutions to introduce birth registry policies targeting indigenous populations. Likewise, findings on low school attendance rates and unsatisfactory health care have given native Brazilians the basis to demand conditions to exercise their citizenship rights.

22. In Guatemala, UNFPA has provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Education for the redesign of curricula to benefit indigenous peoples. Moreover, a study showing that 25 per cent of adolescents between 10 and 14 years of age and 85 per cent of adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age had initiated their sexual life and that a significant number had dropped out of school has led to a partnership with a local non-governmental organization in the Santiago Atitlán, Sololá Province, to provide adolescent indigenous boys and girls with information to prevent unwanted pregnancies and school dropouts.

4. Indigenous healers and cultural perspectives on health and illness should be incorporated into policies, guidelines and programmes

23. In Ecuador, UNFPA has successfully developed the Jambi Huasi health/reproductive health model, which incorporates traditional medicine alongside western obstetric care. The experience includes the active involvement of indigenous people in all decisions, and is increasingly being seen by UNFPA as an effective way to integrate an intercultural perspective into reproductive health, to then be adopted for other indigenous groups in the region. The Jambi Huasi programme offers an opportunity to give reproductive health policies a more multicultural approach.

24. In Chile, UNFPA has provided assistance in the area of population and development, with a focus on the production and dissemination of relevant studies that are expected to have an impact on public policies designed for indigenous populations. A study of experiences in the fields of health, sexuality and reproduction among indigenous people between 1990 and 2004 and another on the impact of the education and health policies of the Aymaras of Chile were carried out with the support of UNFPA.

25. In Guatemala, UNFPA has also been working to improve the reproductive health of indigenous populations. It has supported the Ministry of Public Health in the implementation of a national programme aimed at providing indigenous people with information and services so that they may exercise their reproductive rights and voluntarily decide on the number of children they wish to have.

26. In Mexico, from 1997 to 2001, UNFPA worked in 308 municipalities of five states (Chiapas, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Oaxaca and Puebla), which were characterized by the worst sociodemographic and reproductive health indicators and trends. During that period, an estimated 2 million indigenous persons benefited from UNFPA projects, mainly those that sought to improve access to quality, socioculturally and linguistically relevant reproductive health information and services. Different models and materials were developed by public institutions and non-governmental organizations to assist the projects.

27. Through the current 2002-2006 UNFPA country programme, the coverage of the above-mentioned programmes was extended to eight states (Chiapas, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas), thus contributing to the institutionalization of the models and strategies.

28. In Panama, UNFPA promoted and assisted the Government and an indigenous women's association in the implementation of a five-year project aimed at improving access to quality information, education and services in the area of sexual and reproductive health, including gender equality. The services, provided in 30 indigenous communities of the districts of Mirono and Nole Duima of the Ngobe people, integrate sociocultural and human rights perspectives, including the respect for cultural norms and beliefs in maternal health. Despite such important advances, there is a need to continue consolidation of such services.

5. Information on the rights of the indigenous peoples should be disseminated in the local languages; indigenous women should be trained in human rights and the rule of law; technical assistance should be given to Governments to establish the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples

29. In Nicaragua, UNFPA has contributed to the promotion of indigenous peoples' rights by:

(a) Strengthening the special ombudsman for indigenous peoples. Support has been limited to targeted technical assistance, revision of workplans, political dialogue and advocacy;

(b) Providing technical assistance to the national commission set up as a follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in 2001 in Durban, South Africa. The ombudsman for indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities coordinated the commission, which comprises several national institutions. The UNFPA office supported the Commission with technical assistance and basic logistics;

(c) Providing financial and technical assistance to organize a national forum against racism. In October 2004, a national forum against racism was organized with the financial and technical assistance of UNFPA. More than 100 representatives from various civil society organizations representing different ethnic groups, ministries and other national institutions (such as the national police) participated in a three-day event involving discussions on the factors contributing to racism in the health, educational and legal sectors;

(d) Improving the questionnaire for the national population census for a more accurate depiction of the number of indigenous people and their living conditions. During the preparations for the eighth national population census and the fifth national census on housing, the UNFPA county office worked together with the

national institute for statistics and census in order to improve the information available on indigenous people. The population census was the first to allow for indigenous identity based on self-recognition and to be translated into four indigenous languages (Miskito, Mayagna, Creole and Sumu). UNFPA is confident that the census is a breakthrough that could serve as a model for other countries in the region for measuring ethnicity through a self-recognized identity (i.e. the number of indigenous people that declare themselves indigenous).

30. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, UNFPA has provided financial and technical support for the establishment of a community radio programme in partnership with the Wayuu women's network to promote and raise awareness among the indigenous people of their human rights, particularly of their reproductive rights.

31. In Paraguay, UNFPA has helped provide training to a national body of rural and indigenous women in sexual health and reproductive rights, as well as for new young indigenous women leaders, in particular those from rural areas.

6. Technical cooperation and capacity-building programmes on the involvement of indigenous women should be provided

32. Through its regional programme, the Latin America and Caribbean division of UNFPA has funded the Continental Network of Indigenous Women to formulate a plan of action geared to articulating and strengthening the leadership capacities of indigenous women.

C. Obstacles to implementation of recommendations of the Forum or other policies relevant to indigenous peoples

33. In many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in which UNFPA has been promoting the incorporation of an intercultural perspective into reproductive health services for indigenous women, UNFPA has encountered obstacles from national health systems and health providers themselves, which on many occasions have resisted the incorporation of such a perspective into national programmes. It is through carrying out advocacy initiatives and strengthening the participation of indigenous women themselves that obstacles are now being overcome to varying degrees in different countries. There is a need to emphasize the incorporation of an intercultural perspective into maternal health with Governments if the attainment of Millennium Development Goal 5 is to be achieved, with due respect for human rights, including the reproductive rights, of indigenous women.

34. Most obstacles to the incorporation of the recommendations of the Forum in UNFPA activities have been rooted in national discriminatory attitudes and practices towards indigenous peoples from national Governments and specifically from the health and education systems of such countries.

D. Other recent policies, programmes and activities on indigenous issues within the United Nations Population Fund

35. Since 2000, UNFPA has adopted a culturally sensitive approach to its programmes that furthers human rights through the understanding and respect of

cultures, which are crucial when dealing with indigenous issues and assisting the implementation of the recommendations of the Forum. In all regions, UNFPA has assisted the organization of gender, culture and human rights workshops in order to discuss and better implement this new approach in its programmes worldwide.

36. In the Latin American workshop held in December 2005, a segment was dedicated to multiculturalism and identity. UNFPA strategies were identified for the implementation of population initiatives with a cultural approach.

E. Information and suggestions for the fifth session of the Forum

37. The definition of indigenous-based indicators for measuring the attainment of Millennium Development Goals in each country should be agreed upon and officially included in the guidelines for the preparation of national reports, particularly by countries which have a significant indigenous population. Side events on the contribution of the United Nations bodies to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including relevant and proven recommendations, should be welcomed.

F. United Nations Population Fund conferences and meetings on indigenous issues in 2006

38. In 2006, the Latin America and Caribbean division of UNFPA will prepare its regional strategy for indigenous people. By the end of 2006, UNFPA expects to be able to implement it among its country offices in collaboration with national Governments and indigenous groups.

II. United Nations country team in Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]

Summary

This report presents the framework for coordination of the agencies of the United Nations system in Ecuador and the inter-agency initiatives related to indigenous people, with reference to the Common Country Assessment (CCA 2002) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The CCA recognizes inequality and exclusion as structural causes of poverty. UNDAF identifies three substantive areas of cooperation: poverty reduction through access to quality basic social services and productive activities; ensuring environmental sustainability; and strengthening democratic governance and transparency. Gender and intercultural factors are cross-cutting targets in this cooperation.

A. Cooperation framework

39. In the context of United Nations reform, Ecuador is one of the pilot countries in the region where the harmonizing of views, strategies and actions and the simplification of procedures is going forward. The Common Country Assessment (CCA) of the United Nations system in Ecuador in 2002 highlighted the need to work to reduce inequalities and exclusion in the economic, social, ethnic and gender spheres. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) incorporates in its strategies and actions an intercultural and gender perspective aimed at reducing these inequalities.

40. In order to implement the incorporation of the intercultural perspective in UNDAF programming, the United Nations country team organized a system of lead agencies and inter-agency working groups. One of the groups established is the intercultural theme group, chaired by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in which the focal points of the United Nations agencies participate in an effort to harmonize views, knowledge and experience in their work with indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples and develop and implement an annual work plan agreed by the agencies. The following agencies are part of the theme group: UNFPA, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

41. This practice of coordination among agencies at the country level is in keeping with the United Nations reform as well as the mandate of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of all activities related to indigenous issues within the United Nations system.

B. Coordination of United Nations agencies in Ecuador

42. The intercultural theme group conducted a mapping exercise on the situation of indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians and of existing organizations, which highlighted the gap between the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples and the rest of the population in respect of access to basic goods and social services, participation and political power. The information was compiled with the participation of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian leaders invited by the United Nations system to contribute to the drafting of the report on the situation, as the basis for planning of inter-agency cooperation. The group also produced a policy document for the United Nations system on intercultural matters, which will be reviewed and adopted by the country team.

43. The United Nations system is working on the dissemination of the national report on the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, in coordination with the Council for the Development of the Nations and Peoples of Ecuador, it held a meeting with indigenous leaders, including members of Parliament, to present the report and gather their proposals for including, in a visible and specific manner, the

situation of indigenous peoples in the country. To facilitate the dissemination of the Goals among the indigenous people, the national report on the Goals, to be issued in 2006, was translated into Quechua, and material was prepared for distribution in other native languages. UNDP and PAHO, through a special social research centre, conducted preliminary activities for the incorporation of an intercultural perspective in the provincial reports on the Goals.

44. In the context of the intercultural theme group, some agencies of the system signed a cooperation agreement with the Provincial Council of Chimborazo to provide technical and financial assistance in the three areas defined by UNDAF. For the intercultural theme group, this agreement represents the possibility of developing an inter-agency cooperation process at the local level in the province that has the highest indigenous population in the country.

C. Cooperation among United Nations agencies in Ecuador

45. Inter-agency activities are aimed at the three areas of cooperation defined by UNDAF: poverty reduction and access to basic social services; environmental sustainability; and governance and transparency. In these three areas, United Nations agencies are implementing various projects, some of which are being jointly implemented with the indigenous peoples and nations of Ecuador.

Poverty reduction and access to basic social services

Education

46. During 2005, UNESCO conducted various activities and projects in the areas of literacy and intercultural and bilingual education, by organizing two educational workshops for the strengthening of indigenous languages, in coordination with the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education, through support to the Literacy and Education for Life Programme of Cayambe Canton (over 500 students), the execution of the Literacy and Education for Life Programme in Cuyabeno Canton (110 students), support to the establishment of the pedagogical proposal for the Amawtay Wasy Intercultural University and support to the Indigenous Parliament of America in signing a resolution on the impact of education on the economic, social and intercultural development of indigenous peoples, which was adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States.

47. Under the agreement between the United Nations and the Provincial Council of Chimborazo, UNICEF provided access for girls and boys to basic education through the implementation of the Sílabas programme, through which 5,182 five-year-olds in the province received textbooks. The fact that these textbooks were free of charge helped to ensure access to basic education for boys and girls, especially those whose parents could not afford textbooks because of their low income, which put their children's access to schooling at risk.

Health

48. The inclusion of intercultural aspects in health services is a deeply felt need in the country. To support the Ministry of Health in the adoption of intercultural policies, support was provided for standardizing and disseminating at the national and international level the experience of Jambi Huasi intercultural maternal health

centres, with the participation of delegates from Bolivia, Peru, Panama and Ecuador and the collaboration of UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, PAHO, Family Care International and the Quality Assurance Project. Based on that concrete experience with a 10-year history, an effort was made to promote the adoption of health policies with an intercultural perspective.

49. The sexual and reproductive health of indigenous peoples also received attention from UNFPA, in the provinces of Orellana and Chimborazo, through activities to promote health at the community level, particularly with reference to the implementation of the Free Maternity and Child Care Act.

Rural development

50. At the end of 2005, FAO began a project aimed at strengthening indigenous organizations and at restoring the importance of traditional products in the high Andean regions of Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, which is being developed in the province of Chimborazo. Its main objectives are to strengthen skills in productive organization and to promote traditional products and techniques aimed at improving food and nutritional levels among the indigenous population in the Chimborazo region.

Sociodemographic and health information

51. The use and dissemination of sociodemographic information in towns with indigenous mayors, through the Information System on Indigenous Peoples involves strengthening local planning capacities with UNFPA and UNICEF support.

52. The sociodemographic, maternal and infant health survey conducted in 2004 is an information tool that assists in the adoption of health and education policies in the country. This survey was run by the Ministry of Health, the National Institute of Statistics and Census and the Centre for Population and Social Development Studies. It received support from UNFPA, UNICEF, PAHO, the Inter-American Development Bank and the United States Agency for International Development. For the first time the survey has disaggregated information by ethnic group, showing the gaps in sexual and reproductive health levels between the indigenous and non-indigenous populations.

Environmental sustainability

53. The UNDP Small Grants Programme has supported various indigenous organizations in 14 sustainable development projects dealing with natural resource management, agro-environmental ecosystem management, ecotourism and the promotion of productive farming. Of the these projects, three are national and 11 operate in the following provinces: Azuay, Cotopaxi, Guayas, Imbabura, Orellana, Pastaza, Pichincha and Sucumbios.

Governance

54. In the good-governance sphere, UNIFEM promoted the leadership of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women, increasing their participation in public spaces and decision-making with several supports: the IX ordinary congress of the National Federation of Peasant, Indigenous and Black Organizations (FENOCIN), and national level workshops with the National Council of Indigenous Women of

Ecuador in collaboration with the National Council for Women (CONAMU). It also supported the participation of indigenous women in international events: the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Latin American and Caribbean Encounter of Rural Women. In the same line, UNIFEM also implemented a project of training for trainers on the Manual of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with the participation of young indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women in Pichincha, Guaranda, Riobamba and Esmeraldas.

55. UNDP, working in the framework of the Human Rights Strengthening (HURIST) Programme, a joint project with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), carried out various activities in 2005, such as support for the dissemination of information about the establishment of Amawtay Wasy Intercultural University and for the organization of workshops to prepare participants for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Furthermore, UNDP signed an agreement with the National Directorate for the Defence of Indigenous Peoples and the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education aimed at the dissemination of information on collective rights.

56. The UNHCHR Andean project for the protection of the rights of peoples of indigenous and African descent, a pilot project for Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, is being carried out with the support of the UNDP team in Ecuador. Under this project, a human rights training programme was carried out in Ecuador, along with advisory services for the assessment of the need for training in the human rights of indigenous communities.

Gender issues

57. In the thematic area of violence against indigenous women, UNIFEM in Ecuador developed several activities: (a) with the National Council of Indigenous Women of Ecuador it conducted several workshops with the objective of disseminating Law 103 on violence against women and the family; (b) through the campaign of 16 days of activism on violence against women, the indigenous population of Cotacachi became sensitized, with the participation of the local government; (c) with UNFPA and UNHCHR a collaboration agreement was signed to work in the border area of the province of Sucumbíos, with displaced women; and (d) with UNFPA, a collaboration agreement was made in the Amazonian provinces of Sucumbíos and Orellana aimed at enhancing the management of women in provincial and municipal authorities, as well as the participation and empowerment of peasant women and native organizations.

Children and youth

58. In 2005 UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance to the Confederation of Quechua Peoples of Ecuador and the Indigenous Parliament of America, aimed at developing intercultural public policies focused on children and youth. This included a process in which children participated and were consulted so as to develop a minimum agenda for protecting the rights of indigenous children and youth in Ecuador. Four thousand children and youth participated directly, as did 2,900 indigenous leaders of 14 nations and 16 peoples from the coastal, mountain and Amazon regions and from shanty-towns around Guayaquil, Machala, Quito and Santo Domingo.

59. These activities led to: (a) A minimum agenda with four pillars: land, identity and culture; health and nutrition; education; and social welfare; (b) political will aimed at implementing the agenda starting in fiscal year 2006; (c) identification and/or development of leadership skills in indigenous children and youth; (d) inclusion of the topic of the rights of children and youth in the agendas of the main indigenous organizations of the country; and (e) advocacy of the rights of indigenous children and youth with decision-makers and various other civil society groups in Ecuador.

D. Coordination with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

60. The United Nations system has worked in various ways in Ecuador to coordinate with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, for example by providing support to prepare the participation of Ecuador's indigenous delegation; disseminating information on the Millennium Development Goals and the recommendations of the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to indigenous organizations and to the country team; and sharing information on the seminar on alternative forms of indigenous governance held in Ecuador by the secretariat of the Forum.

Preparation for participation in the fourth session of the Forum

61. UNDP and the United Nations Volunteers implemented a project in 2003-2004 on technical assistance to the International Relations Unit of the Council for the Development of the Nation and Peoples of Ecuador. In that connection, information meetings were held to prepare indigenous people to participate in a number of international forums, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

62. In 2005, the joint programme between the Human Rights Strengthening (HURIST) Programme, UNDP and UNHCR held a number of information and preparation workshops with the Ecuadorian indigenous delegation to the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Representatives of UNIFEM and UNFPA also took part in these workshops. The workshops provided information on the mandate of the Permanent Forum, the Millennium Development Goals and logistical and organizational topics.

Participation in the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

63. Two members of the intercultural theme group participated in the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The UNFPA representative and the Coordinator of the Andean Project of UNHCHR participated in side activities, on the one hand, and in follow-up to HURIST activities, on the other. The mandate of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was then presented to the members of the intercultural theme group and the UNDP team in Ecuador.

Dissemination of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

64. On the International Day of the World's Indigenous People, a workshop was held to disseminate the recommendations of the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in which the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Ecuador and Dr. Nina Pacari participated.

65. The country team held a working breakfast with Dr. Nina Pacari, an expert from the Permanent Forum, to discuss the agencies' contribution to the implementation of the Forum's recommendations. The team agreed to prepare a joint work plan for 2006, in which priority would be given to the following topics: dissemination of the Forum's recommendations, the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, the Millennium Development Goals and the promotion of collective rights. Dr. Pacari pointed out that the Goals should include indigenous peoples' views, together with disaggregated statistics to demonstrate the exclusion of these peoples.

Seminar on alternative governments

66. In 2005, the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues organized a seminar in Ecuador on strengthening alternative local governments. This activity will be followed up in close coordination with the country team and the intercultural theme group.

I. Strengthening United Nations system coordination in Ecuador

67. Since its inception a year ago, the intercultural theme group has carried out a number of activities with the United Nations system to ensure the incorporation of an intercultural approach in its programmes and projects and the coherence of the system in its actions for the benefit of Ecuador, in particular its indigenous peoples and nationals and the Afro-Ecuadorian people.

68. In addition to attending the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the intercultural theme group also participated in the meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, held in Panama City in September 2005, and contributed to the discussions from the perspective of national-level United Nations coordination. The theme group thus helped to coordinate United Nations activities not only at the national level, but also at the regional and international levels.

69. The inter-agency agreement signed with the provincial council of Chimborazo will enable some United Nations bodies to implement their commitment to inter-agency cooperation at the local level. UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA will continue to work together to devise methodologies, working methods and tools to create and manage local development agendas, which will take the form of plans for equity and local competitiveness. PAHO will continue its technical support to the cantonal and provincial health council.

70. The participating agencies are committing themselves, on a priority basis, to a plan for equity and local competitiveness in Chimborazo, a province with a high incidence of indigenous people and problems such as poverty, migration and depleted natural resources. This plan will allow the local governments and civil society to come to an agreement on the thrust of future collective action in the context of territorial unity, on the short, medium and long term, in four key dimensions that are highly interdependent: (a) governance; (b) adequate human capital; (c) basic infrastructure; and (d) competitive development of production.

71. The plan for equity and local competitiveness in Chimborazo for the most part will involve endogenous development within the territory. Its aim is to take

advantage of the region's own potential resources — natural, human, institutional and organizational — to change local social and productive structures in order to improve the quality of life of the people. The plan will be linked to national policies.

72. The intercultural theme group of the United Nations system in Ecuador will enter its second year of activity faced with the challenge of strengthening its efforts to promote coordination and the incorporation of an intercultural approach. Coordination with the United Nations system, the regional offices of the agencies and international mechanisms and forums, such as the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, is crucial to ensuring that country-level cooperation, including the preparation of joint programmes and projects, is more effective and conducive to implementing international recommendations.

V. Conclusions

73. The experience of coordination among United Nations agencies in Ecuador in order to foster the inclusion of an intercultural perspective in their work in support of indigenous people has been very positive and is promoting not only concerted actions but also a convergence of approaches and working methods. The theme group is a mechanism that has helped to operationalize the content of the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) in relation to indigenous people.

74. Besides this positive experience, there have also been some setbacks in terms of support to national indigenous peoples' institutions and organizations on the basis of their own views and priorities, and in terms of the United Nations system itself and the capacities of its agencies to understand and address cultural and ethnic diversity.

75. The international agenda no doubt offers a framework for considering intercultural relations as a matter of human rights, recognition of diversity, governance and inclusion. The Millennium Development Goals are a reference point for focusing United Nations action on reducing gaps in social equity, including those of gender and ethnicity.

76. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and its recommendations also provide guidance in harmonizing the agendas of indigenous people, governments and international cooperation. Our aim is to contribute, on the basis of our specific mandates and inter-agency activities, to the implementation of these recommendations.

77. Lastly, we urge the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to study the experience of United Nations agencies in coordination at the national level, in particular with regard to indigenous people. The Forum could make specific recommendations on how to strengthen this work, taking into account what the United Nations system has accomplished thus far in Ecuador.

United Nations E/C.19/2006/6/Add.8

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 March 2006

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fifth session
New York, 15-26 May 2006
Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Ongoing priorities and themes: human rights, with special emphasis on interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people

Information received from the United Nations system

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

The present report responds to the recommendations made by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its fourth session that were addressed directly to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It also makes reference to activities undertaken by OHCHR that are of relevance to the Forum. OHCHR draws attention in particular to the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights presented to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixty-second session, which reflects all activities that were undertaken in 2005 under the aegis of OHCHR to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples (E/CN.4/2006/77).

The recommendations and conclusions of the expert seminar on indigenous peoples' permanent sovereignty over natural resources and their relationship to land, which was held in Geneva in January 2006, are contained in the annex.

* E/C.19/2006/1.

06-27472 (E) 290306

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I. Introduction

1. The present report responds to the recommendations made by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its fourth session that were addressed directly to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

2. In paragraphs 37 and 65 of its report on its fourth session,[1] the Forum recommended that the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, jointly with OHCHR, organize an expert meeting in 2006 to review the process of realization of indigenous peoples' housing rights globally and identify and document best practices.

3. In paragraph 62 of its report, the Forum also recommended that United Nations bodies and mechanisms and OHCHR strengthen the machinery to address the urgent, gross and ongoing human rights violations, militarization of indigenous lands and systemic violence committed by Member States against indigenous peoples.

4. In paragraph 38 of its report, the Forum also called for the dissemination and full implementation of the recommendations on the relationships of indigenous peoples and land rights, and on permanent sovereignty of indigenous peoples over their natural resources contained in the reports of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people.

5. Paragraph 73 recommends that the Special Rapporteur pay special attention to the situation of uncontacted indigenous peoples, peoples in voluntary isolation, peoples in isolated and remote localities and displaced people.

6. In addition, paragraph 54 of the Forum's report recommends that the Special Rapporteur promote and monitor the realization of indigenous peoples' rights to quality and culturally appropriate education, including treaty rights to education.

II. Adequate housing

7. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognized in its general comment on the right to adequate housing adopted in 1997 that indigenous peoples suffer disproportionately from the practice of forced eviction, often carried out in connection with conflicts over land rights, in the name of development, and in many instances associated with violence. The treaty body and special procedures mechanisms took action on communications that deal with the housing rights of indigenous peoples. The Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living proposed a set of draft guidelines on forced evictions in his annual report (see E/CN.4/2006/41) that makes reference to indigenous peoples.

8. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, jointly with the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, took action on the housing rights of indigenous peoples. An urgent appeal was sent to the Government of Botswana regarding the situation of the Basarwa people living in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve who had been relocated from their traditional homes and hunting ground reserve. Two urgent appeals were sent to the Government of

Brazil concerning the eviction of a number of families from the Guarani-Kaiowa community living on the Cerro Marangatú territory, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, and the ongoing evictions affecting the Guarani indigenous community. An urgent appeal was sent to the Government of Thailand concerning the situation of the Hmong people from the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Further information is contained in documents E/CN.4/2006/78/Add.1 and E/CN.4/2006/41/Add.1.

9. In addition, during his visit to Cambodia from 22 August to 3 September 2005, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing met some indigenous leaders and looked into the housing situation of the indigenous Kuoy community. He noted in his report (E/CN.4/2006/41/Add.3) that, pending legislation or unclear legal provisions concerning the differences between private and State property, transactions involving public property, land concessions and collective property of indigenous lands, for example, result in a situation of uncertainty that negatively affects the right to adequate housing.

III. Women and adequate housing

10. In his final report on women and adequate housing (E/CN.4/2006/118), the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing reiterated that special attention is required for some groups of women, including victims of eviction and indigenous and tribal women, who may be particularly vulnerable to discrimination and are suffering from the consequences of inadequate housing and living conditions. The Special Rapporteur also highlighted the issue of discrimination in housing with respect to indigenous peoples and the need for a general comment on discrimination in housing before the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its sixty-fifth session, in 2005.

IV. Human rights mechanisms

11. Issues of concern relating to the rights of indigenous peoples were raised by other special procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons. Full information is contained in the report of the High Commissioner to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixty-second session (E/CN.4/2006/77).

12. It should also be noted that several treaty body mechanisms continue to attend to the situation of human rights of indigenous peoples. Several recommendations were made in the concluding observations to State parties' reports and a number of general comments or decisions were adopted that are relevant to indigenous peoples. Full information can be found on the OHCHR website (http://www.ohchr.org).

13. The present report indicates below key contributions by the above-mentioned bodies in addressing violations of the rights of indigenous peoples.

14. **The right to free and prior informed consent**. In its decision of August 2005, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination referred to the revised version of the draft Mining Act adopted by the Government of Suriname at

the end of 2004. The Committee expressed deep concern about allegations that resource exploitation and associated infrastructure projects that pose substantial threats of irreparable harm to indigenous peoples were still authorized without any formal notification to the affected communities and without seeking their prior agreement or informed consent. The Committee urged the State to ensure legal acknowledgement of the rights of indigenous peoples to possess, develop, control and use their communal lands and to participate in the exploitation, management and conservation of the associated natural resources.

15. **Customary titles and right of redress**. Under its early warning and urgent action procedure, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reviewed the impact of the New Zealand Foreshore and Seabed Act of 2004 on the rights of the Maori people. The Committee adopted a decision noting the discriminatory aspect of the legislation against the Maori, in particular in its extinguishment of the possibility of establishing Maori customary titles over the foreshore and seabed and its failure to provide a guaranteed right of redress.

16. **Administration of justice**: the Committee also adopted general recommendation 31 on the prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system. The recommendation called upon the State inter alia to ensure respect for and recognition of the traditional systems of justice of indigenous peoples, in conformity with international human rights law; and to take into account, prior to trial, the cultural or customary background of indigenous peoples and to give preference to alternatives to imprisonment and to other forms of punishment that are better adapted to their legal system.

17. **Right to resettlement**: in August 2005, the Committee took action regarding the situation of the Crimean Tatars in Ukraine and recommended that the State take all necessary steps to fully restore the rights of repatriated members of minorities, including the Crimean Tatars, and to afford them just and adequate reparation where appropriate.

18. **Treaty rights, lands and resources**: the Committee also considered the situation of the Western Shoshone people and the status of 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley in a communication of August 2005. In particular, the Committee raised concerns with regard to plans for the expansion of mining and nuclear waste storage on ancestral lands of the Western Shoshone, the access to judicial process to assert their title to land and other rights related to its use and occupation and the effective participation by indigenous communities in decisions affecting them.

19. **Indigenous children**: in cooperation with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, OHCHR convened a meeting on 31 January 2006 to brief indigenous representatives participating in the Working Group on the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on the intention of the Committee to develop a general comment on indigenous children. Some 20 indigenous representatives and four members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child were present and discussed the current draft version of the general comment. The Committee proposed to invite indigenous delegates to provide inputs during a three-day meeting, tentatively foreseen to take place in conjunction with the next session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in July 2006. The objective is to seek maximum consultation directly with indigenous representatives and, hopefully, also with indigenous children.

V. Militarization of indigenous peoples' lands

20. The issue of the militarization of indigenous peoples' lands was raised by indigenous representatives at the session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations held from 18 to 22 July 2005. The Working Group decided that the main theme of its next session in 2006 would be "Utilization of indigenous peoples' lands by non-indigenous authorities, groups or individuals for military purposes".

VI. Permanent sovereignty of indigenous peoples over natural resources and their relationship to lands

21. In its decision 2005/289, the Economic and Social Council endorsed the recommendation of the Commission on Human Rights to authorize OHCHR to convene an expert seminar to give further attention to and to discuss in detail the many political, legal, economic, social and cultural aspects relating to the study on indigenous peoples' permanent sovereignty over natural resources as well as to the study on indigenous peoples and their relationship to lands prepared by the Special Rapporteur of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. OHCHR organized the seminar in Geneva from 25 to 27 January 2006 with the participation of 11 indigenous experts, 2 non-indigenous experts, 24 governmental representatives and 28 non-governmental organizations.

22. The seminar addressed two recommendations to the Forum, namely to consider devoting its sixth session to the question of lands, territories and resources of indigenous peoples, taking into account the results of the present seminar and previous relevant United Nations seminars and studies, and to further strengthen capacity-building and awareness-raising programmes and activities, including at the national and regional levels, in cooperation with indigenous peoples. Such activities should be available to United Nations staff, indigenous peoples, indigenous and non-indigenous civil servants, judicial officials, members of Parliaments and other elected Government officials for the purpose of information exchange, technical assistance and training to contribute to the full realization of the right of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources. The conclusions and recommendations of the seminar are contained in an annex to the present report.

VII. Culturally appropriate education

23. In this respect, it should be noted that the main report of the Special Rapporteur presented to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixty-first session (E/CN.4/2005/88) focused on the obstacles indigenous peoples find in the full enjoyment of their right to education. In addition, in his report to the General Assembly (A/60/358), the Special Rapporteur also urged that culturally appropriate indigenous education be given the priority it deserves, both nationally, in public programmes and budgets, and internationally, by international agencies responsible for promoting development and reducing poverty, such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 23* (E/2005/43).

Annex

Expert seminar on indigenous peoples' permanent sovereignty over natural resources and on their relationship to land

(Geneva, 25-27 January 2006)

Conclusions and recommendations

1. Experts at the seminar on indigenous peoples' permanent sovereignty over natural resources and on their relationship to land, held in Geneva from 25 to 27 January 2006, noting that indigenous peoples continue to be denied access to justice and equality before the law in matters relating to their lands, territories and natural resources, and noting also that indigenous peoples' land and resource rights are not well understood, recognized or implemented in many States, agreed on the conclusions and recommendations set out below.

Conclusions

2. Experts conclude that indigenous peoples have the right to permanent sovereignty over their lands, territories and natural resources, especially those which they have traditionally used or occupied.

3. Experts affirm that this right is inherent and inalienable, and is essential for the exercise of the right of self-determination of indigenous peoples. This right is affirmed in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements between States and indigenous peoples, in international law and the decisions and recommendations of international and regional human rights bodies.

4. Experts note that the right to lands, territories and permanent sovereignty over natural resources encompasses cultural, spiritual, political, economic, environmental and social elements which are essential for the existence and survival of indigenous peoples and require recognition of indigenous peoples' own understandings of their traditional relationship to their lands, territories and natural resources, and their own definitions of development.

5. Experts affirm that recognition and implementation of this right would contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, alleviation of poverty, sustainable development and improvement of the well-being of indigenous peoples consistent with the 2005 Declaration of Heads of State and the objectives and programme of the second International Decade on the World's Indigenous Peoples.

6. Experts underscore the importance of the draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a contribution towards the full recognition of these rights by States and also recognize that the development of international law in relation to indigenous peoples, including in relation to their permanent sovereignty over their lands and natural resources, is an ongoing process that will continue after the adoption of the Declaration by the General Assembly.

Recommendations

7. Experts endorse the conclusions and recommendations contained in the final reports of the Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples and their relationship to their lands and indigenous peoples' permanent sovereignty over natural resources (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/2004/30 and E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/21).

8. Experts call upon States to address inconsistencies in their national laws, ensuring that laws recognizing indigenous peoples' rights over their lands and resources are not overridden or extinguished by other legislation, in particular in relation to extractive industries, natural resource use and the creation of "protected areas". Experts also call upon States to ensure that their national laws and policies relating to indigenous peoples' right to land and natural resources are not discriminatory or inconsistent with international human rights laws and standards.

9. Experts recommend that States initiate and strengthen constitutional, legislative and administrative reforms or amendments that recognize and protect indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, territories and natural resources. Experts also recommend that States establish just and fair administrative and judicial measures to ensure the full implementation of those rights, consistent with international human rights law and indigenous peoples' laws and traditions, and with their full participation.

10. Experts invite States to review their legal and judicial systems to ensure that indigenous peoples are not discriminated against in asserting, claiming and enjoying their rights to their lands, territories and resources, and in treaty negotiation processes.

11. Experts encourage States to recognize the vital importance of implementing national legislation and procedures that protect the rights of indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consent as the basis and framework for development. States are also called upon to establish, in consultation with indigenous peoples and taking into account their legal systems and decision-making processes, effective measures to ensure that this fundamental right is respected, including by third parties, such as private industry.

12. Experts call upon States to comply with their legal obligations under treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded between indigenous peoples and modern States or their predecessors and to implement the decisions and recommendations of international human rights bodies and special rapporteurs recognizing and upholding indigenous peoples' rights to their lands and resources.

13. Experts encourage States to ensure that international obligations under free trade agreements, international financial agreements or multilateral agreements are not used to deny indigenous peoples their human rights, treaty rights, land rights or their right of permanent sovereignty over their natural resources.

14. Experts encourage States and the international community to establish an appropriate international mechanism to assist States and indigenous peoples in the implementation of the right of indigenous peoples to their lands, territories and resources, including demarcation, legal recognition, dispute resolution and financial support.

15. Experts invite the new Human Rights Council to establish an effective and inclusive mechanism to ensure access for indigenous peoples to continue to address their concerns over their lands, territories and natural resource rights as well as other human rights.

16. Experts invite the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to consider devoting its sixth session to the question of lands, territories and resources of indigenous peoples, taking into account the results of the present seminar, previous relevant United Nations seminars and studies.

17. Experts invite the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Permanent Forum and other relevant United Nations organizations and specialized agencies to further strengthen capacity-building and awareness-raising programmes and activities, including nationally and regionally, in cooperation with indigenous peoples. The activities should be available to United Nations staff, indigenous peoples, indigenous and non-indigenous civil servants, judicial officials, members of Parliaments and other elected Government officials for the purpose of information exchange, technical assistance and training to contribute to the full realization of indigenous peoples' right to lands, territories and resources.

18. Experts also invite OHCHR to undertake a study and hold a follow-up United Nations seminar, in cooperation with the special rapporteurs on indigenous peoples and transnational corporations, and drawing upon previous relevant seminars and studies, to assess the role of transnational corporations and international financial institutions in relation to indigenous peoples' rights to lands, territories and resources.

19. Experts request that the present report be submitted to the Working Group on Indigenous Populations at its twenty-fourth session for its consideration, including in preparation of relevant working papers, and that it be publicized and given the widest possible dissemination. Experts also request that the Working Group on Indigenous Populations complete its work on the legal commentary on free, prior and informed consent at its twenty-fourth session.

20. Experts encourage the Working Group on the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to take into account the outcomes of the present seminar when considering the provisions on land, territories and resources in the draft declaration.

United Nations E/C.19/2006/6/Add.9

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 March 2006

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fifth session
New York, 16-27 May 2006
Agenda item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Special theme: Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals

Information received from the United Nations system

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Summary

At its fourth session, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues addressed a number of recommendations to United Nations bodies, including two exclusively to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

UNESCO's response is made within the framework of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and its Action Plan, adopted in 2001, which has become a guiding instrument for the organization's work on dialogue among and with indigenous peoples, and more recently for all actors concerned by the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2015). The programme of action for the Decade includes an appeal to all relevant actors to implement the Action Plan of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Article 4 of the Declaration recognizes indigenous cultures as part of the common heritage of humanity, and also emphasizes the protection and defence of indigenous peoples' human rights and fundamental freedoms as an ethical imperative, inseparable from the respect for human dignity. The response is further made in light of the adoption by the organization of the recent Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), which provides a framework and a tool to ensure the right of indigenous peoples to create and disseminate in a fair environment their cultural goods and services and their traditional expressions, so that they might benefit from them in the future.

The present report largely follows the structure suggested by the Forum's secretariat.

* E/C.19/2006/1.

06-27478 (E) 290306

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I. Response by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to recommendations addressed exclusively to the organization and to those addressed to other United Nations agencies

A. Millennium Development Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Response to recommendations 12, 13, 14 and 15

1. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has developed a broad and holistic view of development, emphasizing the indivisibility of culture and development. In keeping with such a view, the 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity underlined the importance of grounding development in what people know, care about and say that they need. Article 3 of the Declaration states that cultural diversity "is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence". Sustainable development requires that mutual consent be created with people and communities about actions and decisions concerning their development, thus recognizing the contribution that indigenous world views and visions make to sustainable development.

2. The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its thirty-third session in 2005, also recognizes the importance of indigenous cultures and in particular the contribution of indigenous knowledge systems to sustainable development. Article 7 of the Convention proposes the creation of an environment that encourages individuals and social groups to create, produce, disseminate, distribute and have access to their own cultural expressions, paying due attention to the specific circumstances and needs of various social groups, including indigenous peoples.

3. Within the context of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), for which UNESCO is the lead agency, the organization has pointed out that the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development are all underpinned by culture, which is an area of the Decade to which UNESCO will make major contributions. Special focus will be put on methods of intercultural dialogue and indigenous learning approaches as ways to foster sustainability.

4. Since 2002, UNESCO has supported cultural mapping with indigenous communities as a potentially viable tool to elucidate indigenous knowledge systems, institutions, aspirations and cultural practices in order to relate them to actions and policies concerning the development of indigenous peoples.

5. In February 2006, UNESCO organized an international workshop on cultural resource mapping in Havana, in the context of a regional meeting on the theme new perspectives on cultural diversity and the role of communities, to assess the lessons learned from projects around the world. The meeting, which included a comprehensive presentation by a Forum member on the legacy of indigenous peoples in Latin America, led to the formulation of a communiqué on ethical and methodological principles of cultural mapping and other cultural inventory

techniques. Several recommendations were made to UNESCO: (a) to consider promoting training and best practices in the use of cultural mapping, particularly as it relates to cultural inventories, regenerating and transmitting indigenous and traditional knowledge and learning systems, conflict prevention, gender equity and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage; (b) to promote within the organization an understanding of the benefits and risks of mapping; (c) to cooperate with other agencies in the application of cultural mapping to the protection and promotion of cultural diversity, in the sustainable use of natural resources, and using intangible cultural heritage and traditional knowledge to overcome poverty; and (d) to share its findings with the Forum, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme, including the Convention on Biological Diversity. The meeting emphasized that cultural mapping should be recognized as part of a larger process of building mutual consent between marginalized communities and more dominant groups, including the State.

6. The UNESCO response to recommendation 69 on free prior and informed consent is covered in paragraphs 33 to 44 below.

Response to recommendations 21 and 23

7. UNESCO's actions in the field of development are focused on advocacy, research, capacity-building, policy formulation and implementation. The aim is to assist Member States in designing rights-based and culturally appropriate poverty eradication policies founded upon participatory and inclusive processes at the national and local levels. The organization has developed a number of innovative field projects to demonstrate feasibility and potential results as a basis for mainstreaming them nationally or in other countries.

8. UNESCO's Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) initiative is one of 20 thematically cross-cutting projects contributing to the UNESCO programme for the eradication of poverty. Inside the framework of this rights-based approach, LINKS addresses the social and cultural rights of indigenous communities and promotes local knowledge, values and world views as tools to shape and achieve poverty eradication. To that end, it seeks to empower indigenous communities through recognition of the vital importance of local and indigenous knowledge systems for achieving sustainable development.

9. To strengthen the basis for dialogue between State managers and local resource owners and users, LINKS published the indigenous knowledge compendium, entitled *Reef and Rainforest: An Environmental Encyclopedia of Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands* in January 2005 (for further information, see UNESCO response to recommendations 50 and 51).

10. LINKS is currently preparing a publication from the workshop on the challenge of local knowledge, practice and world views, which was organized with the National Centre for Scientific Research of France as part of the international conference entitled "Biodiversity: Science and Governance", held in Paris in 2005.

Response to recommendation 24

11. Addressing the special needs of indigenous communities for post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction, particularly in the aftermath of the tsunami of December 2004, UNESCO, through its Coasts and Small Islands Platform, with

support from the United Nations Development Programme and Chulalongkorn University, is leading a project on the rehabilitation of traditional communities and municipalities in tsunami-affected areas of Thailand. The project focuses on the indigenous Moken and Urak Lawoi communities that were severely affected by that natural disaster. To best meet the specific needs of those communities, it is essential that cultural heritage and traditional lifestyle be considered and that the communities be empowered to actively participate in post-tsunami development.

Response to recommendation 30

12. In February 2006, LINKS published the book *Water and Indigenous Peoples*, which underlines the significance of indigenous water management and rights. Based upon papers and statements from indigenous peoples sessions at the Second and Third World Water Forums, the book will help profile indigenous perspectives at the Fourth World Water Forum to be held in Mexico in 2006.

B. Millennium Development Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

Response to recommendation 49

13. UNESCO was actively involved in the Fifth World Indigenous Education Conference. It provided financial support and technical assistance to the organization of a panel on goal 2 with respect to indigenous education, including the goal of education for all to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, have access to free and compulsory education of good quality. UNESCO also disseminated publications relevant to the theme of the conference, including "Education in a multilingual world" (2003) and "The challenge of indigenous education: practice and perspectives" (2004).

Response to recommendation 50

14. UNESCO addresses the concerns of recommendation 50 through its ongoing programme on cultural and linguistic diversity in education. With a focus on promoting universally shared values and a culturally sensitive diversification of educational contents and methods, UNESCO is working to promote quality education as a fundamental right for all by addressing a broad range of themes, including respect for cultural and linguistic diversity. Based upon the principles stated in its Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, UNESCO has supported Member States wishing to encourage linguistic diversity while respecting the mother tongue at all levels of education, to promote through education an awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity and to make full use of culturally appropriate methods of communication and transmission of knowledge.

15. Over the last year, UNESCO has pursued action in this area through the publication, translation and dissemination of information material, the development and implementation of several field projects, the creation of advisory committees and the organization of conferences and workshops on the subject. Currently, a position paper and database on intercultural education are being developed. The database will be prepared for public access, targeted for use by expert practitioners, non-governmental organizations, academics and other concerned parties and is envisaged in the format of a CD-ROM for wide public distribution.

16. In 2005, several regional and subregional meetings and workshops on multilingual and multicultural education were organized under the auspices of UNESCO:

- In June in Dhaka, a symposium on multilingual education was sponsored by UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and SIL International (Bangladesh). Its objectives were to focus on the education situation faced by many of the 40 ethnolinguistic minority communities in Bangladesh, share specific practices of successful multilingual education programmes in other Asian countries, foster a network of organizations engaged in or planning the said programmes and develop a preliminary set of plans for promoting multilingual education in Bangladesh.
- In October, a workshop on multilingual education focusing on tribal education was sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF, the National Council for Educational Research and Training and the Central Institute of Indian Languages in Mysore, India. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together members of the tribal communities, practitioners, scholars and policymakers to discuss issues relating to the educational needs of tribal speakers and to learn from each other in planning education programmes that are more appropriate to the educational needs of tribal language communities and that affirm the heritage, languages and cultures of learners.
- A regional workshop on mother-tongue/bilingual literacy for ethnic minorities was organized in Chiangmai, Thailand in December 2005. The objective of the workshop was to provide opportunities for participants in those projects and high-level personnel from formal education systems to share and learn from experiences in implementing mother-tongue/bilingual literacy projects. It also aimed to develop a strategy of policy dialogue and follow-up action plans for expansion/institutionalization of the project in participating countries.

17. To facilitate and promote multilingual education, the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok is developing an advocacy toolkit on multilingual education. The toolkit is designed to raise awareness among top policymakers, mid-level planners and implementers, teachers, educators and communities on the importance of multilingual education.

18. The Bureau is moreover helping nine countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam) to implement pilot projects involving mother-tongue/bilingual literacy programmes. Participating countries undertake research with the participation of linguists and community members, prepare context-specific literacy materials using mother-tongue/bilingual approaches and train local personnel in the use of teaching/learning materials for facilitating learning by community members.[1]

19. UNESCO supports the action research project on literacy and curriculum development in mother tongue for the Oraon community in north-west Bangladesh. The project aims at exploring means and tools for developing educational materials in the mother tongue (Sadri) for grade 3, focusing on bridging the gap between Sadri and Bangla, the national language. One of the goals of the project is to explore the feasibility of Sadri-based basic education, not only in economic but also in cultural, social and environmental terms.

[1] See also www.unescobkk.org.

20. In 2006, the UNESCO Santiago office is to publish information on a series of studies and activities that were carried out on educational policies, discrimination and cultural pluralism from 2002 to 2005 in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. The office, in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Education, will also participate in a Latin American congress on intercultural bilingual education in Bolivia in 2006.

21. The UNESCO Institute for Education follows a rights-based approach that includes the right to education in the mother tongue that is culturally relevant and sensitive to indigenous contexts. The recognition of cultural diversity and specific learning needs of different target groups, including indigenous peoples, is one of the guiding principles of the process related to the fifth International Conference on Adult Education.[2] The Institute also produced a background paper on literacy for indigenous peoples for the global monitoring report on education for all.[3]

Response to recommendations 51 and 52

22. UNESCO has continued its collaboration with ministries at the country level to promote education policy reform in favour of indigenous peoples.

23. In its advisory work with Member States, UNESCO refers to the principles and guidelines set out in the position paper on education in a multilingual world.

24. UNESCO continues to provide technical assistance to the development of curricula and guidelines for textbooks and learning materials by producing and disseminating publications. In particular:

(a) *A Comprehensive Strategy for the Elaboration of Textbooks and Learning Materials* (2005) aims to improve quality education through a rights-based approach to textbooks and learning materials.

(b) "Pluralismo lingüístico" (2005), a document developed by the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional of Mexico in cooperation with the UNESCO Mexico office, gives guidelines on how to develop new language policies while taking into account the linguistic diversity of Mexico.

(c) A project on bilingual (Maya/Spanish) books for primary schoolchildren in Mexico aims to train teachers from the 173 schools concerned which will be distributed in March 2006.

(d) Within the activities on World Heritage Education, the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, issued an information package entitled "Our Pacific Heritage: the future in young hands" in November 2004.

25. The UNESCO Windhoek cluster office collaborated with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the implementation of a USAID-funded project to benefit San children in the three settlements in the Ohangwena region, northern Namibia. The project's main objective was to work with the San to lay the foundations for a better life by strengthening early childhood education. The project aimed not only to reach young children, but also to provide a forum to

[2] See the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, 1997, articles 15 and 18.

[3] Available on the UNESCO website http://portal.unesco.org/education.

involve, educate and organize parents and the broader community, to prepare the way for greater participation by the San themselves in the education system.

26. The UNESCO office in Kathmandu is currently promoting an appropriate learning and life skills programme, integrating elements of traditional and indigenous knowledge and skills. The office has prepared visual and print materials on indigenous skills and knowledge.

27. As mentioned in the UNESCO response to recommendations 21 and 23, LINKS published *Reef and Rainforest: An Environmental Encyclopedia of Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands* in January 2005, which ensures a place for vernacular language and indigenous knowledge in Pacific classrooms. The publication was the focus of a pilot exercise, in collaboration with the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and the University of Bergen (Norway), to investigate modalities for enhancing indigenous knowledge content in the classroom.

28. Similar pedagogical tools rooted in vernacular languages and indigenous knowledge are under development with the Mayangna peoples of the Bosawas biosphere reserve in Nicaragua and the Mapuche Pewenche of Lonquimay, Chile.

29. The LINKS programme also hosts an expanding series of interactive CD-ROMs that target indigenous youth by using new information and communication technologies as a vehicle for traditional knowledge. Following the first CD-ROM on Australian Aboriginal knowledge, entitled *Dream Trackers: Yapa Art and Knowledge of the Australian Desert* (2000), a second CD-ROM entitled *The Canoe is the People: Indigenous Navigation in the Pacific* was launched in October 2005. It highlights and honours Pacific islander knowledge of the ocean environment, including the highly developed cognitive skills of navigation and canoe construction. A Maori language version of the *Canoe is the People* CD-ROM and a learning resource pack to facilitate the use of the CD-ROM in Pacific classrooms are currently under development.

30. In collaboration with the LINKS programme, the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture inscribed the bush schools of the Cree First Nations of James Bay (Canada) on the Harmony List established by the Integral Development Asset Management group. The initiative gives recognition to the efforts of elders to combat juvenile delinquency, alcohol and drug abuse, depression and suicide by taking youth away from problematic village life.

31. An ongoing joint project of the UNESCO Hanoi office with UNICEF on the theme "Transition of ethnic minority girls from primary to secondary education" reveals the barriers faced by ethnic minority girls in further education (e.g. poverty, learning-teaching process, family and cultural issues). The outcomes of the case study undertaken in Lao Cai, Tra Vinh and Gia Lai provinces with four ethnic minorities are being promoted in policy debates for the education of ethnic minorities.

Response to recommendation 57

32. As part of the LINKS programme, the Culture and Science Sectors organized an international expert seminar that provided first guidelines for safeguarding the transmission of local and indigenous knowledge of nature in April 2005 at the World Expo, on the theme "Nature's wisdom" (Aichi, Japan). The objective of the meeting was twofold: to explore and document strategies and practices of

transmitting local and indigenous knowledge systems in relation to biodiversity preservation and the sustainable use of natural resources; and to solicit advice and input to the UNESCO programme on linking cultural and biological diversity. The Forum was consulted in the identification of 14 experts. The meeting identified main areas of concern and priority with a view to providing UNESCO with advice on action to be pursued in the short and medium term.

C. Human rights

Response to recommendation 69

33. UNESCO's current medium-term strategy (2002-2007), the organization's major strategic programming framework, outlines the objectives regarding its contribution to the implementation of the International Decade on the World's Indigenous People by promoting pluralism. It emphasizes that efforts will be made to ensure the full participation of minorities and marginalized and vulnerable groups in devising, implementing and monitoring policies and actions which directly affect them through an interdisciplinary approach.

34. Based on the above-mentioned programming framework, the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue drafted in 2005 a conference paper on the work of UNESCO on cultural diversity and principles of free, prior and informed consent regarding indigenous peoples, presented at the International Workshop on Free, Prior and Informed Consent and Indigenous Peoples, organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the secretariat of the Forum in New York in 2005.

35. In response to the request of the one hundred seventy-second session of the UNESCO Executive Board that dialogue among and with indigenous peoples be reinforced in the biennium 2006/2007, UNESCO initiated a new programme on constructing mutual consent with indigenous peoples on policies and actions concerning their development. It is aimed at building knowledge and capacity in support of intercultural dialogue with indigenous peoples to ensure that their aspirations and visions are reflected in local development strategies and national policies, especially as they relate to cultural diversity issues. Activities will be carried out in partnership with the Forum and other agencies and associations representing or defending indigenous peoples, with a special focus on indigenous youth and women.

36. UNESCO has developed a number of standard-setting instruments for the promotion of cultural diversity that provide tools to build mutual consent with indigenous peoples about policies and actions concerning their cultural expression and future development. The most recent of these instruments is the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its thirty-third session in October 2005.

37. In its preamble, the Convention makes explicit reference to the importance of the knowledge systems of indigenous peoples and takes into account the importance of the vitality of cultures, including for persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples. The Convention is based on a number of guiding principles, such as the equal dignity of and respect for all cultures, including the cultures of

persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples (article 2.3). The Convention encourages Parties to undertake a number of measures to promote cultural expressions and to create in their territory an environment which encourages individuals and social groups to create, produce, disseminate, distribute and have access to their own cultural expressions, paying due attention to the specific circumstances and needs of [...] various social groups, including persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples (article 7).

38. As the programme of action for the Second Decade on the World's Indigenous People points out, the challenge will now be for all relevant actors to work towards the ratification by States of the Convention.

39. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003, has already been ratified by 30 Member States and will therefore enter into force on 20 April 2006. The Convention acknowledges the important role played by indigenous peoples in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and recreation of the intangible cultural heritage. The chapter on the implementation mechanism is of great relevance to the principles of consulting and taking into account the views of indigenous peoples, since it emphasizes the importance of involving communities. As concerns the third UNESCO standard-setting instrument relevant to indigenous peoples, the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, it is worth noting that the World Heritage Committee is giving increasing attention to the integration of indigenous concerns in the protection of world heritage, including the recognition of the role played by indigenous communities in the definition of what holds heritage significance.

40. The indigenous fellowship programme, organized in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, is an example of UNESCO's direct collaboration with indigenous communities. In 2005, UNESCO provided financial support and training services to nine indigenous fellows under the anglophone and the francophone programmes. The fellows stayed at UNESCO for a period of two weeks, interacting with UNESCO colleagues and pursuing their specific research interests. Another group of fellows will be welcomed to the organization in September 2006.

41. In February 2006, participants in an international workshop on cultural mapping in Havana underlined that cultural mapping with indigenous communities was a tool for making intangible heritage and indigenous knowledge systems visible in a medium (i.e., a map) that could be understood by both dominant and non-dominant cultures. Cultural mapping is typically used when communities need to negotiate territories and rights, such as access to, control and use of natural resources. Furthermore, cultural mapping is a methodology that can be used to promote intra- and intergenerational knowledge transmission, as long as the process involves different members, gender and age groups of a community, linking the past, present and future. Based on the lessons learned from concrete experiences with indigenous communities around the world, UNESCO has identified some ethical and methodological principles that could orient future work in this area.

42. The project entitled "Information and Communication Technologies for Intercultural Dialogue: Developing Communication Capacities of Indigenous Peoples", which involved training of indigenous communities in audio-visual content production, led to the release in 2006 of a collection of DVDs produced by indigenous populations from Bolivia, Peru, Namibia, South Africa and Gabon. The

project allowed indigenous communities in the five countries to represent their cultural heritage and resources in films produced by them.

43. UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector provided expertise and advisory services to the Mayan community in Guatemala in the development of a community television channel, with the aim of strengthening the expression of Mayan culture and promoting cultural diversity. Furthermore, two projects entailing the use of communication for the preservation of indigenous culture were launched in Bolivia, involving the Chiquitano and Guarini communities.

44. In 2006, UNESCO participated in a workshop organized jointly by the Forum and the Greenland Home Rule Government on "Partnership visions for the Second International Decade on the World's Indigenous People" in Nuuk, Greenland and contributed a presentation on UNESCO and indigenous peoples: partnership to promote cultural diversity, based on an information booklet to be published in 2006.

D. Data collection and the disaggregation of data on indigenous peoples

Response to recommendations 84, 85, 86, 87, 88 and 89

45. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics is continually working towards the development of an appropriate methodology for new indicators and the improvement of existing indicators, including the identification of inequalities within nations and disaggregating by gender. The Institute is aware of the lack of data available on indigenous and minority communities and is in the process of developing a strategy for including the needs of those groups in the development of its statistics. It is currently planning to develop guidelines for national statistics offices on how to help indigenous communities develop statistical instruments that reflect their cultural concepts.

46. The project will be led by statistical experts from, or working with people from, indigenous communities. The Institute will seek members for an indigenous peoples' steering group to act as advisers and to provide leadership in the development of the project.

47. In 2005, the Institute, in collaboration with the Communication and Information Sector, produced a report on measuring linguistic diversity on the Internet for the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis. The report, which addressed the barriers that linguistic minorities face in using the Internet, has arguments that can be applied to the problems linguistic minorities experience when trying to gain access to other services, as well as to the difficulties in monitoring such issues (the report is available in English and French on the UIS website www.uis.unesco.org).

E. Children, youth and women

Response to recommendation 97

48. UNESCO has initiated a tribal adolescent development programme in Bangladesh to create social awareness in the community and initiate actions to achieve and protect tribal rights. The programme, which targets over 300 tribal men and women, including 89 adolescents, also aims to promote literacy among tribal

communities, facilitate life and livelihood skills training for increased family income and establish linkages with governments and non-governmental organizations for tribal issues and interests.

Response to recommendations 26 and 108

49. UNESCO is in the process of improving in-house dialogue on indigenous gender issues and is continually exploring possibilities for strengthening the consideration of indigenous women in its programmes. The organization participates actively in the inter-agency task force on indigenous women and devotes special attention to the development of partnerships with indigenous women's organizations and women leaders. In that regard, UNESCO sponsored a workshop hosted by the Yaaku peoples association in Kenya from 27 September to 1 October 2005.

50. UNESCO is currently consulting with the Forum and partner agencies to design activities aimed at further exploring the diversity of gender relations in indigenous communities and the recognition of indigenous women's views and roles in the development of their peoples and larger conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives.

F. Future work of the Forum

Response to recommendation 140

51. UNESCO participated in the technical workshop on indigenous traditional knowledge, held at the UNICEF regional office in Panama in September 2005, and sponsored the participation of two indigenous experts.

II. Obstacles to the implementation of recommendations

52. UNESCO is working to improve the mainstreaming of indigenous issues in its programme and to further strengthen partnerships with indigenous peoples. It is also striving to improve knowledge regarding the organization's strategy and possibilities to engage with indigenous peoples. As recognized experts working on indigenous issues are predominantly male and non-indigenous, further attention will have to be given to the selection of indigenous resource persons, and particularly indigenous women, who are often inadequately represented in the conception and implementation of activities.

III. Other significant information

53. Within the framework of the First International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, a booklet entitled "UNESCO and indigenous peoples: partnership to promote cultural diversity" will be published in time for the fifth session of the Forum. The booklet is conceived as a tool for all those contributing to the implementation of the organization's programme with regards to the rights and interests of indigenous peoples. Furthermore, it presents UNESCO's involvement in the implementation of the First International Decade and the various activities undertaken by UNESCO in its fields of competence.

54. An international symposium on "Conserving cultural and biological diversity: the role of sacred natural sites and cultural landscapes" was held in Tokyo from 30 May to 2 June 2005 by UNESCO and the United Nations University in collaboration with the World Conservation Union, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the secretariat of the Forum and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The symposium presented case studies on the conservation of sacred natural sites and cultural landscapes all over the world. The symposium called upon Governments, protected area managers, the international system, governmental authorities and non-governmental organizations and others to respect, support and promote the role of indigenous peoples in local communities, as custodians of sacred natural sites and cultural landscapes, through the rights-based approach, in order to contribute to their well-being and the preservation of cultural and biological diversity of such sites and landscapes.

55. UNESCO, in collaboration with the Viet Nam Ministry of Culture and Information, organized a three-day national conference from 15 to 17 February 2006 on the theme "Learning from recent experiences and beginning to identify best practices in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Viet Nam". The conference focused on the preservation and promotion of the intangible cultural values of indigenous people. Out of eight projects discussed at the conference, four dealt with cultural issues of indigenous groups, with emphasis on the involvement of ethnic girls and women.

56. Finally, it should be noted that the UNESCO office in Brazzaville is currently implementing a project financed by the Japanese funds in trust on the promotion and safeguarding of the oral traditions of the Pygmies in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The project is intended to last for three years, from 2005 to 2007.

IV. Information and suggestions on the theme of the fifth session

57. UNESCO participated in an international expert group meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, indigenous participation and good governance, held in New York in January 2006.

58. UNESCO fully recognizes the concerns raised by the Inter-Agency Support Group report from the fourth session of the Forum regarding the Millennium Development Goals as vehicles for addressing the needs and aspirations of indigenous peoples. Those concerns are multiple, multifaceted and interconnected, and must be addressed in a unified manner in order for the current state of affairs to be turned around. The Goals need to be considered and approached holistically and understood in the context of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which sets out a much broader framework for human development, focusing on democracy, human rights and the protection of vulnerable and minority groups.

59. In the case of the Goal 1 and its targets and indicators, it is the inadequacy of the definition of poverty solely in economic terms that has been increasingly debated and criticized. But even from a strictly economic viewpoint, UNESCO has emphasized that the Goal targets and indicators of the Millennium Development Goals are inadequate for indigenous peoples, as they focus solely on monetary income and ignore the informal subsistence economies that are so important for the fulfilment of many of the basic needs of indigenous peoples. As currently defined,

the Goals do not take into account alternative lifestyles and their importance to indigenous peoples — not only in the economic sense, but also as the underpinnings of social solidarity and cultural identity.

60. Regarding Goal 2, attention should be paid to existing mechanisms rather than to the creation of new ones. The Millennium Development Goal campaign should complement rather than replace the mechanisms already in place. Therefore, UNESCO's contribution to the achievement of education-related goals will substantially draw on the mechanisms and instruments set in place for the Education for All process and within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which is led and coordinated by organization.

61. UNESCO joins other agencies in calling for a careful and comprehensive refinement of the Millennium Development Goals to take into account indigenous peoples' perceptions of well-being and poverty, as well as their own formulations of development pathways to sustainability; to recognize the great diversity and continuing dynamism of indigenous peoples' cultures, contexts and aspirations; and to directly involve indigenous peoples from the local level upwards to national and international levels.

62. UNESCO sees the need for greater efforts to strengthen mechanisms for consultation and participation of indigenous peoples in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly within the framework of the poverty reduction strategies, the common country assessments and the United Nations Development Framework. As articulated in the technical position paper of the Inter-Agency Support Group, implementation should be understood as a process rather than as ad hoc events.

63. The participation of indigenous peoples and the inclusion of their concerns is a major challenge for the Millennium Development Goals; it is crucial for their achievement that they be developed and applied at a local level in a culturally sensitive manner. In this way, indigenous peoples and other minority groups would develop a sense of ownership in the process, thereby contributing to its long-term sustainability.

64. The information booklet to be published by UNESCO in March 2006, "UNESCO and indigenous peoples: partnership to promote cultural diversity", illustrates how UNESCO has worked with indigenous peoples to promote sustainable development based on mutual consent with indigenous peoples on actions and policies of concern to them.

United Nations E/C.19/2006/6/Add.10

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 March 2006

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fifth session
New York, 15-26 May 2006
Agenda item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Special theme: the Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals

Information received from the United Nations system**

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

Summary

In response to recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) provided background information on the understanding of HIV/AIDS-related issues among indigenous peoples and an analysis of some key factors influencing vulnerability and the impact of HIV and AIDS on indigenous peoples in the context of social, cultural and economic development. Examples of initiatives on HIV prevention among indigenous communities were presented. UNAIDS presented a few issues relevant to HIV prevention and AIDS care and treatment among indigenous peoples to be discussed at the Forum. Recommendations were also made to the Forum in this regard.

* E/C.19/2006/1.

** The present document was submitted late in order to ensure the inclusion of the most recent information.

06-27945 (E) 120406

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I. Introduction

1. The present report was prepared by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) at the request of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to assist the Forum in its discussion of issues relating to Millennium Development Goal 6, Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, at its fifth session.

2. In talking about indigenous peoples, the present report draws upon the common understanding that has evolved in the international community of what is distinctive about indigenous peoples' experience. Central to that understanding is the notion that indigenous peoples are descended from the original inhabitants of a particular region, have a special attachment to that land and have a belief system that flows from that attachment. It is an attachment which pre-dates the establishment of modern States and territories, and which in many cases has been dislocated by the establishment of those jurisdictions and by more recent economic development. Because the relationship between indigenous peoples and their land is often neglected by mainstream economic development, the threat posed to that fundamental part of indigenous culture is a feature of the modern experience of many indigenous peoples.[1]

3. Indigenous peoples seek to maintain the historical continuity of their connection to land, and the cultural identity that accompanies it, in the face of other cultures that have become dominant by reason of colonization or occupation. In many countries, indigenous peoples are minorities and lack a voice within mainstream political institutions. To that extent, the experience of indigenous peoples is often one of marginalization within the countries in which they live and limited participation in the political process. They are excluded from the institutions that shape mainstream political, economic and social values.

4. How those factors play out in the day-to-day lives of indigenous peoples varies greatly across communities and countries. There are great differences in the extent to which particular indigenous communities have been able to maintain traditional ways of living, including traditional beliefs and practices. Some indigenous peoples still live in their own self-contained communities, often geographically isolated from major urban centres. Others struggle to reconcile traditional communal ties and values with the economic and social realities of the country in which they live. While their indigenous heritage may remain a central part of their identity in each case, the impact that has on their lived experiences may be radically different.

5. For that reason, any discussion about indigenous peoples as a single group necessarily involves considerable generalization that does not do justice to the enormous diversity in indigenous culture and experience across the world. That must be borne in mind when reading the present report. Of course, not all the issues discussed herein will be relevant to all indigenous peoples, nor will they affect them all in the same way. Nonetheless, the common themes in the experience of many indigenous peoples in different parts of the world shape how the HIV epidemic affects their lives and their communities. Those themes are explored in order to shed light on what can be done to reduce the spread and impact of HIV within indigenous communities.

II. Knowledge of the extent of HIV infection in indigenous populations

6. Very few countries have any reliable national surveillance data to indicate the true level of HIV infection among indigenous peoples. The available data are summarized in the annex. Only some surveillance programmes record the ethnicity of those tested and, even where infection levels in specific ethnic groups are identified, there is limited information about the specific patterns of HIV risk and the way in which HIV affects those communities. As with all data about HIV incidence and prevalence, caution must be exercised when drawing conclusions about the level of HIV risk based only on the results of HIV tests carried out on selected segments of the population.

7. The above is particularly true when trying to determine levels of HIV infection in marginalized groups, which is the case with many indigenous populations. Where people are geographically isolated, for example, or less able to access the health-care system, they may be missed by many HIV testing programmes. Moreover, where stigma and discrimination are associated with indigenous status, there is a disincentive for indigenous peoples to disclose their status if asked. Social and cultural taboos may also discourage indigenous peoples from disclosing forms of behaviour that place them at risk of HIV infection, if those behaviours are considered unacceptable in their communities.

8. There may also be good reasons for investigators not wanting to target marginalized groups, such as indigenous peoples, for specific HIV data collection. In the case of groups that are already disadvantaged and subject to stigmatization, the publication of data suggesting high levels of HIV infection within those groups can increase the stigma they experience, even though there might be high infection rates in other parts of the population. That concern has led some policymakers to avoid policy interventions focusing specifically on HIV in indigenous peoples, and instead incorporate those initiatives in other programmes, such as those dealing with sexual health generally. The possible negative consequences of data collection highlight the need for any research into HIV in indigenous communities to be carried out with care in order to avoid causing unintended harm to the people concerned.

9. Just as the collection of data on HIV in indigenous communities may lead to stigma and discrimination, the absence of data can lead to neglect or invisibility. The absence of reliable data about HIV infection in indigenous populations has sometimes made it more difficult for concerns about the impact of the HIV epidemic on indigenous populations to be given priority on national and international policy agendas. There is a risk that resources will instead go to HIV programmes targeted at populations where better data exist to demonstrate already high levels of HIV infection. Jurisdictions need to strike a balance between policies that seek to protect indigenous communities from being incorrectly perceived as an HIV threat to mainstream communities and the need to have reliable data on the impact of HIV in indigenous communities that can be fed into planning and resource allocation processes.

10. In this context, however, it needs to be emphasized that the number of diagnosed cases of HIV is only one measure, and often not the best, of the HIV risk faced by a particular community. The global experience with the epidemic has made

it clear that there are key factors that render some individuals and communities acutely vulnerable to HIV. Many, indeed most, of those risk factors are present in a large number of indigenous populations. They include poverty, marginalization, lack of political or social power, fragmentation of family and community relationships, geographical isolation, low literacy rates, poor general health, limited access to health care, drug use/injection and low individual and community self-esteem. Any one of these factors is enough to increase an individual or community's susceptibility to HIV infection. To have many of the factors present within one population group signals clear cause for concern about the impact of the HIV epidemic on indigenous populations and highlights the challenges faced in trying to reduce its spread within such communities.

III. Examples of strategies, policies and initiatives focused on HIV in indigenous populations

11. Just as there has been little consistent data collection on HIV in indigenous populations, there have also been only a relatively small number of specific policies and programmes implemented to address the spread and impact of HIV within indigenous communities. A few countries have adopted national strategies covering HIV in their indigenous populations, but this has generally happened only in better resourced countries, such as Australia and Canada. Many countries have done nothing to specifically address HIV issues in their indigenous peoples, while a small number of countries have embarked on small-scale initiatives. In some places, community-based and other non-governmental organizations have taken the lead in HIV prevention and care in indigenous communities, with greater or lesser degrees of Government support.

12. It has not been possible within the scope of the present report to undertake a full review of all past and present initiatives relating to HIV in indigenous peoples, and there would be value in studying such initiatives further to consider the lessons learned from what has been done. Examples of some of the key strategies and policies implemented to date are set out below.

Aboriginal strategy on HIV/AIDS in Canada for First Nations, Inuit and Metis people, March 2003

13. The strategy was developed by the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, with funding from the Canadian Government, as part of the Canadian national strategy on HIV. It covers nine strategic areas, including community development, capacity-building and training, sustainability, partnerships and collaboration, legal, ethical and human rights issues, engaging aboriginal groups with specific needs, and holistic care, treatment and support.

National indigenous Australians' sexual health strategy, 1996-1999, and national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sexual health and blood-borne virus strategy, 2005-2008

14. The above strategies address HIV in the context of indigenous sexual health generally and complement Australia's national strategy on HIV. There was a deliberate policy decision to position indigenous HIV initiatives within a sexual and reproductive health approach to avoid further stigmatization of indigenous

Australians and to recognize the need for significant improvements in indigenous sexual and reproductive health.

American Indian/Alaska Native initiative, United States Department of Health and Human Services

15. The American Indian/Alaska Native initiative is designed to integrate drug-use and mental health services with HIV primary health care for American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Six demonstration projects and a technical assistance centre comprise this five-year initiative, which began in October 2002 and ends in September 2007. Since American Indian/Alaska Native agencies operate under a federal policy that promotes self-determination for American Indian and Alaska Native peoples, the technical assistance centre respects the interests of American Indian/Alaska Native projects to develop culturally appropriate solutions to community, tribal and village issues and encourages solutions to come from the local level.

Indigenous peoples' development plan — Guyana, 2004

16. As part of its HIV/AIDS prevention and control project, the Government of Guyana implemented the indigenous peoples development plan. The plan identifies a range of factors that increase the vulnerability of indigenous communities in Guyana to HIV/AIDS, such as poverty, social disruption caused by mining, migration of young people, drug use, early sexual activity and certain cultural beliefs and practices. Among the interventions proposed are distribution of material on HIV translated into indigenous languages, voluntary counselling and testing centres close to indigenous communities, greater education for young girls and community development projects for young indigenous people.

Health of the indigenous peoples initiative — Pan American Health Organization, strategic directions and plan of action, 2003-2007

17. The plan of action covers indigenous health generally, but includes issues relating to HIV, particularly access to care and essential drugs. It notes existing inequities in health status and access to health care among indigenous peoples and other population groups in the Americas and outlines a plan of action to improve indigenous health status, including strengthening networks of intersectoral collaboration; incorporating indigenous perspectives and therapies in primary health care; promoting strategies that address the social exclusion of indigenous populations; and encouraging indigenous participation in the management of health services.

HIV/AIDS project for aboriginal youth — Public Health Agency of Canada, 2005-2007

18. The project, implemented in partnership with the Native Men's Residence, in Toronto, aims to increase awareness of HIV and promote safer sex among homeless aboriginal youth.

Management of HIV/AIDS in indigenous primary care organizations, Australia

19. A resource guide was developed by a group of indigenous Australians infected and affected by HIV. It was developed for use in remote and urban Aboriginal medical services and in other primary care services.

Australian Federation of AIDS Organizations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gay, sistergirl and transgender HIV/AIDS — sexual health project

20. This long-standing Government supported project was established in 1996 and supports the indigenous work of Australia's national HIV non-governmental organization. In an epidemic driven primarily by sex between men, the project focuses on indigenous gay men, "sistergirls" and transgendered people. In addition to health promotion activities and advocacy, the project provides cultural awareness training for non-indigenous HIV workers and HIV training for indigenous health workers.

IV. Key factors affecting the impact of the HIV epidemic on indigenous populations

A. Relationship to land

21. If one of the key identifying characteristics of indigenous status is taken to be an attachment to ancestral land, then the displacement of that attachment due to economic and political developments in many countries of the world has a profound impact on the lives of indigenous peoples. Many indigenous communities are no longer able to live on the land from which they draw their cultural identity and have been forced to abandon their traditional ways of living as a result. That, in turn, affects in many ways how the HIV epidemic may be experienced in those communities.

22. The devastating consequences of colonization for the general health of most indigenous peoples has been well documented. Infectious diseases such as smallpox decimated many indigenous populations during the early phases of colonization, and that has been followed by dramatic increases in chronic disease brought about by the disruption to traditional indigenous lifestyles. In particular, diseases such as diabetes and chronic heart disease are now prevalent in many indigenous communities as a result of poor diet and unhealthy lifestyles in people whose preferred way of living is no longer tenable.

23. The forced transition to a lifestyle more compatible with the demands of modern economies has usually involved a relinquishment, in whole or in part, of the attachment to ancestral land. While some indigenous communities now live on reservations or in enclaves established in an attempt to preserve traditional lands, the extent to which those communities are able to retain traditional lifestyles is severely curtailed. Poverty, unemployment, imprisonment, alcoholism and drug use, including injecting, may be more common in some settings, as has been extensively documented and analysed in many studies. Moreover, the geographical isolation of the communities means that they have limited access to mainstream educational, health-care and public-health facilities. Each of the factors gives rise to a heightened risk of HIV.

24. Where the severing of their traditional relationship to land has resulted in the migration of indigenous peoples to urban areas, a similar range of social problems is evident. Indigenous communities within cities are generally marked by higher levels of poverty and other related factors that have an adverse impact on health. Their marginalization makes them more exposed to the risks of HIV transmission and harder to reach for HIV prevention and care.

25. Just as significant as the impact on lifestyle is the effect that dispossession of traditional land has had on the cultural and spiritual well-being of indigenous peoples. A community lacking in social cohesion, whose internal values are under threat, is not well placed to address the impact of HIV infection. Affected by the loss of land, territories and natural resources, which are fundamental elements for them to sustain themselves as peoples, many indigenous peoples' social and cultural capacity is also diminishing to address the challenges of HIV within their communities and to take steps to address the factors that increase the likelihood of HIV transmission.

B. Poverty

26. While there are of course exceptions, many indigenous communities are economically disadvantaged compared with other segments of the population. That is often a direct consequence of the disruption to subsistence on land that has characterized many indigenous cultures. The resulting loss of self-sufficiency has meant that many indigenous peoples are forced to move away from their community in search of work. Low levels of formal education mean that indigenous peoples may find it more difficult to obtain secure work and are frequently employed in lower paid jobs with little access to employer supported health schemes. Many who migrate from their traditional rural homes to urban areas end up living in poverty in urban slums. Although no longer geographically isolated, they have no sustainable livelihood and are still denied access to many basic services, including health care.

27. The correlation between poverty and the risk of HIV infection is well recognized and occurs at many different levels. Those living in poverty are less likely to have access to education, health care and other social resources. Many factors linked to poverty and deprivation of identity make indigenous peoples more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, or to become victims of trafficking in women and children. It may be difficult for people living in poverty to afford condoms or to insist on their use. Moreover, the absence of hope, often associated with poverty, deprives individuals of the psychological and emotional resources to protect themselves and others against HIV infection.

28. Because so many indigenous peoples are economically disadvantaged, it is important to appreciate the nexus between poverty and increased vulnerability to HIV. An understanding of that connection needs to inform HIV policies and programmes for indigenous communities, since the issues involved transcend concerns about health alone and include fundamental questions about indigenous status and the relationship between indigenous peoples and the larger communities in which they live.

C. Geographical isolation

29. As with any community living in a remote area, indigenous communities that are geographically isolated from major urban centres suffer particular disadvantages that increase their vulnerability to HIV infection. Limited access to schooling results in lower levels of literacy and increased vulnerability to HIV. Public health campaigns, including HIV prevention, may not reach geographically isolated communities, and if they do, they may have less relevance or practical application. Condoms may be difficult to obtain and expensive. Social problems in some geographically remote indigenous communities, such as alcoholism, drug use and domestic violence, may increase the risk of HIV transmission.

30. Access to health care is also a particular problem for all geographically isolated communities. Health facilities, if they are accessible at all, may be many hours away and may offer a limited range of services. Opportunities to obtain free or low-cost health care are more limited than in urban centres. Specialized HIV diagnosis, counselling and treatment are unavailable in most geographically remote areas, and concerns about confidentiality abound in small communities. For that reason, people in remote communities may be less likely to acknowledge their risk of HIV infection and, in the absence of readily available HIV treatments, have little incentive to learn their HIV status.

D. Different demographics and the disproportionate impact on young people

31. The demographics of many indigenous populations differ from the demographics of the general population in the countries in which they live. Many developed countries are facing issues associated with increased longevity and an ageing population. The combination of increased morbidity and mortality, shorter lifespans and recent improvements in health and education for many indigenous peoples has meant that most people in many of those populations are young people. Young indigenous people face particular issues of partial integration into mainstream society, disconnection from their traditional culture and dislocation from land.

32. HIV and sexual and reproductive health programmes need to be able to target those young people with acceptable and appropriate messages and support. That is complicated by their multiple identities as indigenous young people and as members of broader societies. Some cultural practices that put young people at increased risk also need to be addressed, because some issues are difficult to acknowledge and discuss openly.

E. Consequences of marginalization

33. While not all indigenous cultures are minority cultures in the country in which they live, most of them are, and awareness of being marginalized from mainstream social, political and economic culture is a feature of much indigenous experience. Some indigenous communities choose to live separately or in voluntary isolation from the mainstream, but others are excluded by reason of their different traditions

and culture. In either case, there is a sense of "otherness" attached to indigenous status and the risk of stigmatization within the broader community.

34. In the context of the HIV epidemic, it is now well accepted that marginalized groups within any society face a heightened vulnerability to HIV. That can be attributed to a range of factors. People already marginalized are more difficult to reach with HIV prevention messages and may be disempowered from taking steps, individually or communally, to protect themselves and others. If they already suffer stigma, they are less likely to acknowledge the risk of HIV infection and thereby expose themselves to further discrimination. Feelings of exclusion and an inability to exert control over one's own life are critical obstacles to HIV prevention.

35. Even within indigenous communities, there are groups that are more marginalized than others. As in many communities, indigenous or otherwise, the position of women and children may mean that they are especially vulnerable to exploitation and, in turn, to the risk of HIV infection. Marginalization may therefore be relevant at more than one level when considering HIV risks.

36. The marginalization of indigenous peoples has resulted in reduced access to essential health and welfare systems, employment, voluntary HIV counselling and testing services, sexual health services, antenatal care, including prevention of mother-to-child transmission, drug and alcohol services and HIV treatment care and support services. Those services form the foundation of successful HIV programmes and, while there are specific examples in some communities of attempts to tailor such services to the needs of indigenous peoples, they are not widespread enough to ensure the coverage required to produce desired HIV and health outcomes.

37. On the other hand, marginalization need not always have a negative impact on a community's capacity to respond effectively to the epidemic. Members of an indigenous community may be marginalized from the mainstream and yet despite that, sometimes, as part of efforts of identity-rebuilding, they may try to maintain a traditional sustainable way of life while coping with new challenges, including HIV and AIDS. In that way, identification as indigenous can sometimes be empowering rather than the opposite, and it should not automatically be assumed that greater integration of a marginalized culture into the mainstream will necessarily enhance its capacity to respond to HIV.

F. Different understandings of health and medicine

38. The international response to the HIV epidemic to date has been driven to a large extent by doctors and public health practitioners whose training, experience and understanding has come from Western medicine. Emphasis has been placed on ascertaining levels of HIV infection, reaching perceived "at risk" populations with prevention programmes and expanding access to antiretroviral therapies and other forms of treatment.

39. For many indigenous communities however, the Western medical tradition has no resonance. Such communities may have radically different understandings of disease and its spread, based on deeply held spiritual or traditional beliefs. Scientific explanations of HIV infection and transmission may not be easily reconciled with traditional conceptions of disease in those communities. Even where traditional

cultural practices may contribute directly to the spread of HIV, change is unlikely to occur just because Western science dictates that it should.

40. Traditional healers play a central role in many indigenous communities and shape their understanding about health and wellness. Often, wellness is understood to be much more than the absence of disease and may be inseparable from spiritual and religious dimensions. The community's faith in the healing power of traditional medicine may mean that traditional healers command a trust and respect far greater than that given to any doctor or health worker.

41. The different constructions of health and healing that exist in a large number of indigenous communities mean that many current HIV strategies are simply inappropriate for those communities and that interventions developed within the Western medical model are likely to fail. Different sources of trust and understanding within indigenous communities may need to be recognized, including the role of traditional healers and other spiritual leaders. If appropriate partnerships can be created to develop HIV prevention and care programmes that draw upon the cultural understanding of traditional healers and spiritual leaders and the respect they command within their communities, such efforts can be important forces for change to reduce the impact of HIV on indigenous communities.

42. It is more common for indigenous communities to take a "whole of health/whole of life" approach to dealing with health issues. In mainstream societies, health programmes are often vertical in nature, for example, dealing with HIV or heart health or diabetes. Indigenous knowledge and traditions favour dealing with people and communities in a more holistic way, and that approach is often in conflict with the single disease or health issue model. Many indigenous communities are facing a wide range of health and well-being challenges and are searching for ways to incorporate a response to HIV into existing initiatives and programmes rather than dealing with HIV as a single issue.

G. Low levels of participation in political and policymaking processes

43. Whether as a result of history, cultural tradition, size or other factors, few indigenous communities have strong representation in their national political institutions. While attempts have been made more recently in some countries to ensure indigenous participation in the policymaking process, at least in relation to issues concerning them, the more common experience of indigenous peoples is that they lack a significant political voice in the country in which they live.

44. When it comes to the formulation of effective HIV strategies, the low level of political participation by indigenous peoples is a serious impediment. Because the spread of HIV in any community involves complex questions of culture, sexuality and social relations, and because indigenous cultures, by definition, are different from prevailing or mainstream cultures, the development of strategies to reduce the impact of HIV on indigenous populations requires real and active engagement with those communities. Just as the contribution and involvement of people living with HIV has been central to an understanding of the epidemic and to the capacity to respond effectively, so too the involvement of indigenous peoples in the policymaking process will be essential to an understanding of how and why the HIV epidemic is affecting indigenous peoples, and what can be done to bring about change.

45. The political invisibility of many indigenous communities, however, presents a particular challenge in that regard. As long as indigenous communities remain outside the policymaking process, there is always a risk that they will be overlooked in HIV policies and programmes or that interventions will fail because they are not grounded in an understanding of indigenous culture and beliefs. The implementation of culturally sensitive and appropriate HIV strategies for indigenous peoples can be achieved only be if conscious efforts are made to draw indigenous communities into the policymaking process.

H. Increased burden of care already existing in indigenous communities

46. Because of poor levels of general health within many indigenous communities, many already bear a disproportionately high burden in terms of caring for family members and others who are sick. That burden is particularly heavy in remote communities with limited access to mainstream or community health-care facilities and associated services such as home care. In those communities, the burden of caring for those who are ill falls upon relatives and other members of the community, who may struggle to accommodate those demands because of their own poor health or socio-economic disadvantage.

47. Communities whose resources for care are already stretched by the burden of poor health are ill equipped to deal with the further strain placed on them by HIV. That compromises not only the quality of care available to those with HIV but also the capacity of the community to embrace and act upon the need for effective HIV prevention measures. The response to the HIV epidemic is more likely to be one of helplessness rather than a resolve to take steps to avoid HIV infection.

V. Leadership and advocacy actions the Permanent Forum could consider to reduce the impact of HIV on indigenous communities

A. Engagement with the global movement towards universal access to HIV prevention and care

48. The outcomes of the 2005 World Summit, the Group of Eight Summit and the World Health Assembly, in which calls are made for universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care, present an opportunity for the Forum to work with United Nations organizations and international aid agencies to ensure that indigenous issues are considered in the strategies and action plans that support such initiatives. Indigenous issues cut across all aspects of HIV prevention and care. Universal access targets will not be met if the implementing agencies are unable to deal effectively with the significant development issues facing many indigenous populations.

49. The Forum currently receives regular reports from United Nations agencies. It could require that future reports include coverage of progress towards those universal access targets for indigenous communities.

50. However, such a requirement should not imply a passive role for the Forum. The outcomes will be more effective if the Forum can find ways to work in

partnership with those agencies and with others to assist in overcoming the significant barriers to access that exist in many communities and nations.

B. Participation in the development of models of HIV intervention that acknowledge the social and economic factors that affect indigenous populations

51. Models of HIV prevention and care that have proven successful in non-indigenous communities need significant modification if they are to be relevant to and successful among indigenous peoples. The Forum is well placed to work in partnership with United Nations agencies, donors and regional and national HIV coordinating bodies to ensure that policies and programmes are adapted to the needs of particular indigenous peoples.

52. The production of a set of resources highlighting effective partnerships and successful HIV interventions in indigenous communities would assist external agencies to better tailor their programmes.

53. Because so many of the factors that make indigenous communities particularly vulnerable to HIV relate not to health status but to their subordinate social, economic and political status within the broader societies in which they live, any policies on HIV in indigenous communities need to be seen in that context. Efforts to encourage voluntary HIV testing and acknowledgement of HIV risks, for example, are unlikely to succeed if steps are not taken at the same time to protect already stigmatized indigenous populations from further discrimination. Care and treatment for indigenous people with HIV cannot be provided effectively where general health care is already unaffordable or inaccessible. Some indigenous peoples who face increased HIV risks because they have no means of support except sex work, or who are vulnerable to human trafficking, cannot do anything in the face of those risks unless they are assisted in achieving a greater measure of economic self-sufficiency.

54. Addressing those broader social and economic determinants of vulnerability to HIV is a large task. Deep-rooted imbalances of that kind cannot be remedied easily or quickly, if at all. Nonetheless, in formulating HIV policies for vulnerable communities such as indigenous peoples, it is important to acknowledge the social and economic realities of the lives of those people. Poverty alleviation, literacy education and legal advocacy services may assist in addressing HIV risks just as much as targeted public-health education programmes. An integrated approach that situates HIV policy in this broader context is important to avoid the pitfall of seeing HIV as a stand-alone policy issue.

C. Advocacy for the availability of better data and information to drive HIV policy and planning in indigenous communities

55. The lack of accurate data and information to assist in HIV policy and planning for indigenous communities is a significant impediment to effective outcomes. While some jurisdictions have resisted the inclusion of ethnicity information in HIV surveillance programmes, fearing that this would increase the stigma and

discrimination experienced by indigenous populations, the absence of data makes planning and resource allocation extremely difficult.

56. The Forum could call for the development of a guidance paper by an appropriate United Nations agency to help surveillance system planners and policymakers to safely include the collection and reporting of ethnicity information in their second-generation surveillance systems.

57. Surveillance data is only one small part of the picture. The availability of social research data examining the particular context of risk in communities and the relative effectiveness of a range of HIV interventions is also a crucial part of the planning process. That appears to be lacking in many communities. Further research on HIV in indigenous communities, if properly focused, could assist in the implementation of appropriate and effective policies. Epidemiological data showing levels of infection and modes of HIV transmission can help to ensure that indigenous peoples are not overlooked in HIV planning and resource allocation and can assist in directing efforts to where they will have maximum impact. Research of that kind can also enhance understanding of what behaviours and environments place indigenous populations most at risk so that responses can be designed accordingly.

58. The possible harmful consequences of HIV research on indigenous populations must also be kept firmly in mind. Research in the area has to be approached with care. Participatory research models, involving research collaboration with indigenous communities and strict adherence to the principle of free, prior and informed consent, can help to ensure that research in this area does not cause unintended harm and end up being contrary to the interests of indigenous peoples.

59. The Forum could play a role in adapting and disseminating existing good practice documents that set out guiding principles for conducting research with, on and for indigenous communities.

D. Assistance in the development of strategies based on an understanding of indigenous culture, practices and beliefs

60. All communities have their own values and practices that must be understood in order to find effective ways of reducing the impact of the HIV epidemic. The values and practices of indigenous communities may be less well understood than others because they are usually separate from the mainstream and may have particular traditions that are unique to them. They may range from different beliefs about health and disease, and different values governing relationships within families, to different sources of trust within the community and particular meanings given to the roles of traditional healers or other spiritual leaders.

61. Given the differences that may exist between indigenous beliefs and ways of living and those of other communities, it is evident that effective HIV policies for indigenous peoples must be based on an understanding of the culture, practices and beliefs of each indigenous community. However, the difficult process requires at the outset an appreciation of what cultural factors may underpin particular forms of behaviour that place indigenous peoples at risk of HIV. Only then can culturally appropriate strategies for achieving change be developed within those communities.

67. The Forum is in a good position to advocate for the development of training programmes and resources that assist HIV policymakers and programme designers to take better account of those issues.

F. Fostering of indigenous community participation and informed consent in policy development

68. No effort to disseminate information on HIV and related prevention programmes involving sex, sexuality or family relationships within a community will be successful unless the individual members of that community decide themselves that information and HIV prevention are necessary. That emphasizes the fact that the principle of free and informed consent by indigenous peoples to interventions affecting them is not just rhetoric. Rather, it is fundamental to the success of HIV policies and programmes for indigenous peoples.

69. For this goal to be achieved there must be active participation by and engagement with indigenous communities as a central part of the policy response. This is important not only for the development of policies grounded in an understanding of the cultural context within each community but also to ensure that the members of the community involved accept that HIV policy measures affecting them are necessary and appropriate and are committed to supporting them.

70. Mechanisms for achieving a genuinely participatory process may vary greatly between different indigenous communities and may need to be tailored to accommodate ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences. Tensions between individual and communal interests and within traditional community hierarchies may need to be recognized and dealt with. External policymakers may still have an important role in this regard and in facilitating and supporting the implementation of HIV policies within indigenous communities. However, the relationship needs to be one of partnership and collaboration, extending beyond mere consultation, notwithstanding the power imbalances that may exist between indigenous populations and the societies in which they live.

71. The Forum has ample experience of fighting for meaningful participation of indigenous communities in all areas of policy and planning. It could bring that experience to the issue of HIV and provide leadership by establishing and promoting a set of standards that agencies, donors and jurisdictions could use to improve their performance in this area.

VI. Conclusion

72. To conclude on a positive note, it needs to be said that identification with a minority culture does not always have to be a disadvantage in this context. Any strong cultural identity can be a source of pride and can provide a powerful motivation for those who identify with that culture to take steps to protect the welfare of their community. There are certainly examples in the response to HIV where cultural minorities have been able to mobilize their communities to change behaviour that leads to the spread of HIV by drawing upon a shared sense of purpose and a common wish for their community to live and thrive.

68. In developing HIV policy responses for indigenous peoples, the potential for identification with indigenous status to be used as a positive force in that way should not be overlooked. Even in communities suffering the effects of cultural dislocation and fragmentation, a wish to preserve indigenous culture and identity can still emerge as a force for change, as long as such responses are nurtured and supported within the broader policy framework.

Notes

See ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries and E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7 and Add.1-4.

Annex

Summary of available surveillance and case-reporting data

1. The data available on HIV and AIDS in indigenous communities are very sparse. Only a few countries and states within countries with significant indigenous communities have been collecting passive and active surveillance data. The available data are summarized below. Many of the figures quoted refer to very small populations and the percentages can change dramatically with the inclusion of a single extra case making any analysis of trends very difficult.

2. Each report refers to indigenous peoples using different terminology. In each case the terminology of the report has been used. No offence to indigenous peoples is intended in quoting these terms.

Australia

3. Per capita rates of HIV infection in the indigenous and non-indigenous populations are similar and both rates declined in the period from 1995 to 1999. The rate of HIV diagnoses gradually increased from 4.0 per 100,000 in 2000 to 4.7 per 100,000 in 2004 for the non-indigenous population. In the indigenous population the rate of HIV diagnoses increased from 3.7 per 100,000 to 5.2 per 100,000 from 2000-2004. The rate of AIDS diagnosis in the indigenous population rose from 1.5 per 100,000 in 2000 to 3.6 per 100,000 in 2004. The corresponding rate for the non-indigenous population declined to 0.8 per 100,000 in 2004.

4. The main differences between the patterns of infection and risk in the indigenous versus non-indigenous population are: (a) a higher proportion of indigenous HIV infections are attributed to heterosexual sex than non-indigenous HIV infections (36 per cent for indigenous, 19 per cent for non-indigenous); (b) a higher proportion are attributed to injecting drug use (20 per cent for indigenous, 3 per cent for non-indigenous); (c) a higher proportion were among women (33 per cent of indigenous cases versus 10 per cent of non-indigenous cases).[a]

Canada

5. Of the AIDS diagnoses prior to 1994, 86.4 per cent were among white Canadians, 8.7 per cent among black Canadians and 1.3 per cent among aboriginal Canadians. Of the total AIDS diagnoses to 2003, 53.8 per cent are among white Canadians, 20.7 per cent among black Canadians and 14.4 per cent among aboriginal Canadians. The proportion of aboriginal Canadians among people diagnosed with HIV has remained relatively steady since 1998 at around 20 per cent, while the proportion of black Canadians among people diagnosed with HIV has increased from 9.3 per cent in 1998 to 14.4 per cent in 2004 (for those provinces/territories that submitted ethnicity data).[a]

6. Aboriginal peoples are overrepresented in the HIV epidemic in Canada and make up a growing percentage of positive HIV reports and reported AIDS cases. Injecting drug use continues to be a key mode of transmission in the aboriginal community. HIV has a significant impact on aboriginal women, the national rate of HIV among pregnant women in Canada is estimated at between 30 and 40 per

100,000 while one ongoing British Columbia study has revealed a rate of 310 per 100,000 among aboriginal pregnant women. Aboriginal peoples are being infected with HIV at a younger age compared to non-aboriginal persons. There is an increasing number of aboriginal peoples among newly diagnosed people with HIV.

7. It is important to note that only 29.4 per cent of the 12,600 positive HIV tests reported in Canada between 1998 and 2003 contained any information about ethnicity.[7]

New Zealand

8. A total of 1,212 people have been diagnosed with HIV since 1996, of whom 5.7 per cent of the men diagnosed and 0.7 per cent of the women diagnosed have identified themselves as Maori.[8]

United States of America

9. There are no HIV data presented. Several states with significant indigenous populations have only recently passed laws to require HIV surveillance.

10. AIDS data show that survival rates are lower for indigenous people with AIDS. In 2004, the estimated AIDS diagnosis rate among American Indians and Alaska Native adults and adolescents was 10.4 per 100,000 compared with 75.4 per 100,000 among African Americans, 26.8 per 100,000 among Hispanic Americans and 7.2 per 100,000 for white Americans. A risk-factor analysis for HIV diagnoses among American Indians and Alaska Natives from 2000-2003 shows transmission rates, for males, of 61 per cent from male-to-male sex, 11 per cent from male-to-male sex and injecting drug use, 15 per cent from injecting drug use alone and 12 per cent from heterosexual sex and, for females, 69 per cent from heterosexual sex and 29 per cent from injecting drug use.[9]

11. Data are difficult to interpret as American Indians and Alaskan Natives are often wrongly classified because of assumptions about skin colour, name or residence or because people being tested sometimes give false ethnicity information, fearing stigma and discrimination.

12. HIV risk in American Indian and Alaskan Native communities is compounded by higher levels of poverty, unemployment, substance use, sexually transmitted infections and violence.[7]

Central and South America

13. Indigenous communities and some ethnic communities tend to have higher rates of HIV infection than the general population. In Honduras in 1999, the HIV prevalence rate was six times higher among the Garifuna communities on the Atlantic coast than it was among the general population. Also in Honduras the Miskito indigenous community has been strongly impacted by the HIV epidemic. A seroprevalence study conducted at the end of the 1990s among the Kuna people in Panama indicated an HIV prevalence higher then the national average. The case among indigenous populations is similar in Canada. In Suriname, according to a

studies conducted in 1997, 17 per cent of all cases of HIV/AIDS in the country occurred among the ethnic group known as the Maroon, even though the Maroon account for only 10 per cent of the population.[5]

Notes

[1] *HIV, STD, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia Annual Surveillance Report 2005*. National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research, University of New South Wales, 2005.

[2] *HIV and AIDS in Canada: Surveillance Report to 30 June 2004*. Public Health Agency of Canada, November 2004.

[3] *HIV/AIDS Epi Notes: Understanding the HIV/AIDS Epidemic among Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: the Circumstances at a Glance*. Public Health Agency of Canada, 2004.

[4] *AIDS New Zealand*, issue 55, February 2005. University of Otago.

[5] CDC HIV/AIDS Fact Sheet: HIV/AIDS among American Indians and Alaska Natives. Centers for Disease Control, July 2005.

[6] Center for AIDS Prevention Studies Fact Sheet: What are American Indians and Alaskan Natives' HIV Prevention Needs?. University of California at San Francisco, January 2002.

[7] See the Regional HIV/STI Plan for the Health Sector 2006-2015. WHO/Pan American Health Organization, 2005.

United Nations E/C.19/2006/6/Add.11

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 March 2006

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fifth session
New York, 15-26 May 2006
Item 3 of the provisional agenda
Special theme: the Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals

Information received from the United Nations system*

United Nations Children's Fund

Summary

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is pleased to submit its report to the fifth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The present report provides an overview of UNICEF activities towards the implementation of recommendations issued by the Permanent Forum for the past three sessions.

Overall, since the establishment of the Permanent Forum, indigenous issues have gained more visibility within the organization, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. The recommendations of the Permanent Forum have guided the work of UNICEF in some key areas related to indigenous peoples. The momentum generated by the Permanent Forum, through such parallel activities as technical workshops and through the mobilization of such actors as the Inter-Agency Support Group or the Committee on the Rights of the Child has influenced the work of UNICEF on indigenous issues at the global, regional and country levels.

As stated in previous reports, UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which, in addition to the principle of non-discrimination, specifically mentions in its article 30 the right of indigenous children to enjoy their own culture, speak their own language and practise their own religion. The UNICEF mission states that in everything it does, the most disadvantaged children ... have priority. The increased attention paid to indigenous children has materialized with a specific mention of indigenous peoples in the new UNICEF medium-term strategic

* The present document was submitted late to ensure the inclusion of the most recent information.

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I. Response to recommendations addressed exclusively to the United Nations Children's Fund

Indigenous children and youth

1. Since all of the work of the United Nations Children's Fund by definition relates to children, section I will focus on child participation.

2. As underlined by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and constantly emphasized by UNICEF, indigenous children's participation in decision-making, both within their communities and in the broader society, is an essential element for the realization of their rights. Children's participation in decisions affecting them not only means that children have the right to express themselves; it also trains them to become active citizens and gives visibility to their cause.

3. Following a recommendation of the Permanent Forum, the UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, organized a meeting of indigenous children and adolescents from Latin America and the Caribbean in July 2005 in Madrid. About 80 children from 17 countries participated in the meeting and adopted a final declaration in which they urged Governments, indigenous people's organizations and international organizations to act for the realization of their rights. While the meeting was in itself a milestone, the process leading to the meeting was no less important. In each country, workshops and other activities took place with children to prepare for the Madrid meeting. That process gave visibility to indigenous children's rights, influenced national political agendas and contributed to creating indigenous youth networks.

4. Participation in decision-making enables children to be aware of their rights and have the ability to claim them. In Colombia for example, with UNICEF support, 728 adolescents from the Wayúu, Arhuaco, Guambiana, Nasa, Pasto, Inga, Awa, Quillacinga and Cocama peoples made participatory analyses of the situation of their rights from an ethnic perspective, with a specific focus on their communities. Two meetings were held in the communities of Ipiales and Guambia to initiate the creation of a youth network to support the actions deriving from the meeting.

5. Child participation can also influence political processes and help children communicate with their community leaders. For instance, in Ecuador, an agenda for observance of the rights of indigenous children and adolescents was drawn up as a result of a participatory and consultative process involving 4,000 children and adolescents and 2,900 indigenous leaders of the country.

6. UNICEF also uses participatory activities as a tool to educate, promote tolerance and end discrimination. In Mexico, UNICEF facilitated an exchange between urban indigenous adolescents in collaboration with the government of Mexico City. The exchange brought together indigenous youth from the major cities of Mexico to share experiences and formulate future plans. The effort resulted in the creation of a national network of adolescents to address the particular issues and realities of urban indigenous communities in Mexico.

Indigenous women

7. UNICEF is fully involved in promoting the rights of women and girls and, in doing so, is guided by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Examples of culturally sensitive programmes with indigenous women and girls are mentioned throughout the present report under the relevant sections.

II. Information and suggestions regarding the Millennium Development Goals

Millennium Development Goals

8. While all the Millennium Development Goals affect children, the present report will concentrate more precisely on those Goals that are directly related to children and represent a focus of the United Nations Children's Fund's work.

Extreme poverty and hunger

9. All UNICEF activities are aimed at addressing poverty and promoting sustainable development. In indigenous communities, UNICEF supports activities to promote safe drinking water and to address malnutrition.

10. In Paraguay for instance, cooperation agreements have been established with three indigenous organizations, and alliances have been made with indigenous communities and organizations in the context of projects and programmes financed by UNICEF. Projects for provision of supplies for water and sanitation in the indigenous communities of Macherety, Chandi and La Herenecia have been supported, as well as the monitoring of the quality of water in Caaguazu and Chaco Central (more than 30 indigenous communities are located in those areas). In health and nutrition, the institutional capacity of local public services for the adequate care of indigeneous children and women was strengthened with the cultural adaptation of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness manual to two indigenous languages. The training of health workers and volunteers was promoted and research on food safety and mother and infant health in the Lower Chaco was carried out. Oral rehydration rooms have been set up in Central Chaco and storerooms have been set up in Caaguazu.

Education

11. For many years, UNICEF has been supporting bilingual and intercultural education programmes in indigenous areas. That work is ongoing. With the Millennium Development Goals related to education, the promotion of gender equality has become a priority of the United Nations Children's Fund's work in the area of education.

12. The 25 by 2005 initiative was launched to give priority to girls' education. The stated objective was to redouble efforts to eliminate gender disparities in primary education in 25 priority countries by 2005. Among the participating countries is Bolivia, which has a large indigenous population. In that country, UNICEF has made significant efforts to promote indigenous girls' education through various

means. Under the "Indigenous Girls' Education" project, UNICEF supported the building of boarding facilities and funded a school transport system to get nearly 1,500 primary school children to class on time and in better mental and physical condition. It also delivered school materials to more than 26,000 primary school students in selected municipalities. With the aim of keeping working girls in school, the Education for Working Girls in El Alto project granted scholarships to 560 girls that attend night school and helped obtain certificates and national identity cards for 378 of the girls. In coordination with the municipality of El Alto, the Friendly School project was implemented in 12 primary schools in 2005. Results included the provision of school equipment, such as computers, sport kits and educational materials, and teacher training.

13. The Indigenous Girls' Education project in Bolivia also helped to improve the quality of education by supporting teacher initiatives on innovative teaching strategies and methods. The most successful innovations were shared with other schools. Recognizing innovative ideas helped with teacher development and rewarded schools with educational materials. UNICEF also contributed to the institutionalization of non-formal education (adult education) with the Ministry of Education. That team helped to develop curricular guidelines, norms and procedures, intercultural bilingual education strategies, primary education modules and a national database that helps to compile and process statistical data and indicators.

14. In Paraguay, a special project has been developed to strengthen the basic education of indigenous girls in three ethnic groups, in alliance with diverse sectors and indigenous people's organizations. Inter-institutional spaces of dialogue on indigenous education at both the national and subnational levels, have been established. Research work has been carried out on the situation of indigenous education in Paraguay and on the situation of indigenous girls and women within the context of education. Teaching materials utilized at indigenous schools have been revised and updated, with a view to deleting gender stereotypes and making materials friendly to girls. Teachers have been trained on the gender and cultural aspects of their work with indigenous communities. Work has also been done with indigenous organizations to promote the incorporation of young indigenous girls into the formal educational system. The indigenous organizations with which the project has worked have achieved a greater regularity in the attendance of teachers to schools and a greater acceptance by indigenous families of girls' attendance at school. Literacy centres for young and adult indigenous people have opened, with wide female participation in the literacy courses offered. During 2005, a 17 per cent rise in school enrolment of indigenous children in relation to 2004 was registered. Of the children who enrolled in 2005, 80 per cent have completed their school year (20 per cent more than in 2004). A total of 100 per cent of the indigenous children have been registered in the civil register, and those in the third grade of basic education have also obtained their national identity cards.

15. In Namibia, UNICEF has continued to focus its attention on educationally marginalized children. Interventions have drawn attention to those left behind and left out of the system, noted for its high level of access (enrolment) and primary level retention. Outreach efforts for San children in Otjozonjupa and for girls' retention in Kavango both highlight a rights-based approach in order for duty bearers to meet their obligations. Training workshops for teachers on improving

retention of San children in primary school in one region and training support with teaching methodologies have also been provided.

Maternal mortality

16. Addressing maternal mortality among indigenous women requires health services to take better account of the cultural traditions and customs linked to childbirth. An innovative approach was undertaken by UNICEF in Peru. That programme intervention has been mentioned in a previous report to the Permanent Forum, when it was first implemented. Four years later, UNICEF has been able to measure the success of and draw lessons from the experience.

17. The intervention developed by UNICEF-Peru during the last four years shows that taking an intercultural approach to obstetric care increases the coverage of institutional obstetric services, reduces maternal and perinatal mortality and establishes a more gratifying relationship between the service provider and the user. Cultural differences and resistance can be transformed into "binding systems" for placing users in contact with health professionals and technical staff in rural areas.

18. A participatory study done in 2000 shows that resistance to institutional birthing is mostly cultural in nature. Four strategies were instituted to overcome that barrier. They include maternity waiting houses to resolve the difficulty posed by geographic distance; family and community support to make maternity and the mother's condition a priority; comprehensive health insurance to cover the cost; and the cultural adaptation of maternity services to overcome the fear of cultural differences that prevent indigenous women from seeking maternal health care. Traditional practices were systematized on the basis of universal know-how and several research projects conducted at the local operational level. Finally, UNICEF-Peru identified the health facilities where the staff was most committed to this intervention and provided them with training. Facilities that provide training for the health sector now have a more open approach to culturally sensitive health care. Overall, the experience has transformed everyday service by promoting cultural changes in the approach to care and in its routine elements.

19. Until 1999, only 24 per cent of the rural mothers in Peru gave birth at a health-care facility. In the regions served by the UNICEF-Peru Cooperation Programme, the proportion has tripled. Now three out of four pregnant women avail themselves of health-care services, particularly for childbirth (considered a transcendental rite of passage, as it is an act that entails life). Over time, the experience has become local and regional policy, and it was adopted recently by the Ministry of Health as a national standard to be implemented as public policy throughout the country.

Child mortality

20. The causes of child mortality are multiple. Indigenous children are in many cases very vulnerable owing to poverty, malnutrition, lack of safe drinking water and lack of access to basic services. The United Nations Children's Fund works to address the root causes of child mortality in indigenous communities, in particular those in remote areas.

21. In Brazil, the deaths of 15 children among the Guarani-Kaiowás indigenous people in the south of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, between January and March 2005, led UNICEF to conduct a rapid assessment to verify the nature and extent of the emergency. It was found that the children were dying of diarrhoea and that there

epidemiological defences were low, due in large part to malnutrition. Most of those deaths could have been avoided by provision of safe drinking water and vitamin A. Thanks to emergency support and a national appeal in Brazil, UNICEF procured 9,000 ceramic water filters and supplies of sodium hypochlorite solution. Through its partnership with the National Health Foundation and in coordination with local municipal authorities, training in the use and maintenance of water filters was provided for close to 9,000 families in 15 municipalities, and megadoses of vitamin A were administered to the children. As a result of that initiative, under-five mortality among indigenous children dropped from 102 (per 1,000 live births) in the first 10 months of 2004 to 61 in the same period of 2005.

22. In Peru, vaccine brigades travel from health centres to isolated rural Andean and Amazon communities in Cusco, Apurimac and Ayacucho. So far, 82 of the brigades have been instituted and have managed to protect 12,300 children in 220 rural communities, many of them indigenous. Project activities were also expanded specifically on malaria control and on health improvement of the Candoshi and Shapra mothers and children. Continued assistance was provided to help control hepatitis B among the Candoshi and the Shapra in Alto Amazonas, which is threatening the extinction of those ethnic groups. The support from UNICEF-Peru focused specifically on immunizing newborns in an effort to break the cycle of transmission, which affects 75 per cent of the population in the indigenous communities. In the Condorcanqui Province (Department of Amazonas), UNICEF-Peru helped to control an epidemic outbreak of human rabies, which caused the deaths of 11 children from the Awaun and Wampis ethnic communities.

Data collection and disaggregation

23. Data collection and disaggregation is a priority issue for the Permanent Forum, and UNICEF has integrated the recommendations of the Permanent Forum into its work in statistics. In addition to country specific studies and situation analyses, of its last round of Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) being carried out in 2005, UNICEF has included questions related to the mother tongue, religion and ethnic group of the head of the household.

Intercultural perspective

24. As previously noted, programmes involving indigenous peoples can be significantly strengthened when they adopt an intercultural perspective. Examples presented above in the area of health and education show that programmes are more efficient when they take into account that perspective.

25. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, for instance, the intercultural approach has been applied mainly in the work in indigenous municipalities and communities in Zulia and Amazonas. The approach was intended specifically as a useful tool for improving the quality of health and education services while simultaneously making them more culturally relevant to the indigenous peoples benefiting from the Programme for the Andean Region (PROANDES) and the Amazon Subregional Programme.

26. However, to put an end to discrimination, it is key to communicate the importance of an intercultural perspective within the general population. In Mexico, UNICEF has carried out a project, "windows on my world", aiming to loosen

Capacity-building and participation

the project, the indigenous adolescents participated in the first indigenous youth meeting, which gathered more than 1,200 youths participating in cultural, recreational and sports activities.

35. In the Philippines, after the December 2005 floods, UNICEF assisted communities in facing the disaster. The beneficiaries were the upland poor families and the indigenous Agta, Dumagat and Remontado communities residing in the mountain ranges of Eastern Luzon. In November 2005, family care packs were sent to approximately 1,500 families in Quezon province that were displaced by the escalating hostilities between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the New People's Army. School materials were also sent to more than 8,000 students who were caught in the conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front in Sulu. Those activities were implemented with strong participation of the non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations that have access to indigenous peoples and mountain communities. Local government units and community organizations provided all the labour requirements in all the construction projects.

United Nations E/C.19/2006/6/Add.12

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 March 2006

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fifth session
New York, 15-26 May 2006
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Special theme: the Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining goals

Information received from the United Nations system**

United Nations Development Fund for Women

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

I. United Nations Development Fund for Women

Summary

Since 1994, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has been developing projects and programmes that respond to the need to incorporate indigenous issues to the forefront of its agenda. Integrating indigenous women's rights is fundamental to UNIFEM, and it seeks to more fully develop and expand its existing projects while eliciting the cooperation and support of other United Nations agencies.

The UNIFEM programme focuses on advocacy for indigenous women's rights and eliminating discrimination. Its approach rests on mainstreaming gender and women's human rights in its programme by engaging indigenous groups, particularly women, boys and girls, and enhancing civic engagement through strategic partnerships between associations and advocacy groups.

Mainstreaming gender within the larger context of indigenous rights is at the core of the UNIFEM project implementation strategy, and UNIFEM recognizes that incorporation of indigenous women's issues and distinct interests is an ongoing process which it seeks to support.

* E/C.19/2006/1.

** The present document was submitted late in order to ensure the inclusion of the most recent information.

06-27923 (E) 100406

A. Response to recommendation addressed exclusively to the particular agency

Recommendation 119

1. Within the framework of inter-agency work in Central America, UNIFEM, with the cooperation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration and the Pan-American Health Organization, held a regional meeting of indigenous women and United Nations system organizations in Panama in 2005, where a regional inter-agency support group for indigenous peoples was established. Jointly with academic research institutions and civil society organizations, UNIFEM developed a follow-up strategy with indigenous women's organizations in Central America and Mexico to promote respect for indigenous women's rights. The proposal has been developed within the inter-agency framework and is part of the Fund's participation in the Inter-Agency Support Group for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. UNIFEM has been part of the creation of a working group in Mexico that will contribute the indigenous women's perspective to the common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework process (UNFPA, ECLAC and the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights).

2. In the framework of the inter-agency work in Ecuador, UNIFEM, under a memorandum of understanding between UNHCR and UNFPA, supports displaced indigenous women near the northern border of Ecuador in issues of sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS. In addition, UNIFEM supported a national survey that included violence against women with an ethnic perspective and has been participating in the inter-agency multicultural thematic group, ensuring that gender mainstreaming is included, and particular attention has been given to the preparations for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

3. UNIFEM is an active member of the task force on indigenous women of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and contributed to the task force's publication entitled "Indigenous Women and the United Nations System: Good Practices and Lessons Learned" by providing two cases on its work with indigenous women in Bolivia and Ecuador.

Recommendation 120

4. UNIFEM has been in close consultation with indigenous women's organizations involved in the first-world fair of indigenous women art makers, to be held in Tijuana, Mexico, in April 2006, with a view to supporting the participation of indigenous women in this Fair.

B. Response to recommendations addressed to one or more agencies or to the United Nations system in general under one or more items of the Permanent Forum's mandate

5. UNIFEM strengthened its partnership with indigenous women and leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean, ensured their active participation and facilitated subregional meetings to identify priorities and make recommendations for agency support. UNIFEM has organized an inter-agency dialogue to listen to the demands and priorities of indigenous women, which led to the development of a three-year regional programme for Mexico and Central America and the leveraging of resources from United Nations agencies to support said programme.

6. UNIFEM has stressed the agenda of indigenous women in two projects in the Central American region, especially related to the economic rights and political participation of indigenous women in Guatemala.

7. Indigenous women's issues were incorporated into the sixth annual international meeting on gender statistics in Aguascalientes, Mexico, organized by UNIFEM, the Mexican National Women's Machinery and the National Statistics Office. Representatives from 14 countries attended this meeting, which addressed the need for special indicators for indigenous groups. As a result, a working group on gender statistics for indigenous populations was set up to follow up the meeting. In Ecuador, UNIFEM supported a capacity-building workshop on mainstreaming of indigenous and ethnic issues in the production of statistics.

8. Regarding the work with indigenous women's organizations and participation, the UNIFEM office and the Andean region have supported a consultation with indigenous women in the five Andean countries on their priorities on political participation to construct an indigenous women's agenda to be launched in Quito. The UNIFEM Southern Cone office supported the Paraguayan national indigenous women's network to organize the second national meeting of indigenous women and to contribute to the strengthening of CONAMURI, the Paraguayan indigenous women's group. Finally, UNIFEM supported indigenous women's networks and advocacy for the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, which contributed to the approval of a resolution sponsored by Bolivia on indigenous women's rights.

II. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Summary

One of the mandates of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development is to research ways to protect traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities. The research is intended to make an in-depth, practical and substantive contribution to policy dialogue and consensus-building on the topic. It will be available as an information document for the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in March 2006 in Curitiba, Brazil.

9. The mandate adopted at the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (Bangkok, 2000) to study ways to protect traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of local and indigenous communities and enhance cooperation on research and development on technologies associated with the sustainable use of biological resources was renewed at the eleventh session, held in June 2004.

10. The protection of traditional knowledge is an important issue for indigenous groups, yet many feel that the intellectual property system fails to adequately safeguard traditional knowledge. A number of actions have been proposed by developing countries and others in order to redress the imbalances in the intellectual property system at the international level. One key proposal is to require the disclosure of the origin or source of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge in relevant patent applications. This would help countries keep track of how their genetic resources are being used and patented abroad. Such a requirement could also include evidence of prior informed consent and benefit-sharing.

11. In response to an invitation by the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2004, UNCTAD commissioned a research paper entitled "Analysis of options for implementing disclosure of origin requirements in intellectual property applications". The paper argues that there is a need for an international system of mandatory disclosure of origin requirements and outlines such a system. It is intended to make an in-depth, practical and substantive contribution to policy dialogue and consensus-building on the topic. It will be available as an information document for the March 2006 meeting in Curitiba, Brazil.

12. UNCTAD is also carrying out research into further possible measures connected with the protection of traditional knowledge, such as an international regime for the recognition of national regulations on access and benefit-sharing.

United Nations E/C.19/2006/6/Add.13

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 March 2006

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fifth session
New York, 15-26 May 2006
Items 3 and 4 of the provisional agenda*

Special theme: the Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining goals

Ongoing priorities and themes

Information received from the United Nations system**

World Intellectual Property Organization

Summary

By the present note, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) responds to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues made at its fourth session in 2005. In particular, attention is drawn to: (a) the draft instruments for the protection against misappropriation and misuse of traditional cultural expressions/expressions of folklore and of traditional knowledge being discussed by the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore; (b) the establishment by its General Assembly of a voluntary fund for accredited indigenous and local communities; (c) the initiation by WIPO of consultations and studies on the relationship between customary law and intellectual property; and (d) the ongoing WIPO programme of consultations and capacity-strengthening with indigenous peoples and local communities, often in cooperation with other United Nations agencies and organizations, as well as the Forum.

The present note also reports on WIPO's participation in a technical workshop on indigenous traditional knowledge, held in Panama City from 21 to 23 September 2005 and convened by the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, organized by the secretariat of the Forum and hosted by the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Children's Fund.

* E/C.19/2006/1.

** The present document was submitted late in order to ensure the inclusion of the most recent information.

06-27917 (E) 100406

I. Responses to recommendations addressed or relevant to the World Intellectual Property Organization on indigenous issues

1. The recommendations of the fourth session of the Forum on Indigenous Issues that addressed or were relevant to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) continue to guide not only the work of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore itself but also the broader activities of WIPO on related issues.

2. In response to those recommendations, the present note provides the information set out below.

Draft instruments on the protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions against misappropriation and misuse

3. The protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions against misappropriation and misuse is the subject of active policy development, norm- and capacity-building programmes at WIPO. Policy development and norm-building are mainly conducted by the Intergovernmental Committee.

4. WIPO member States have called for accelerated progress in that area, stressed the international dimension of issues and emphasized that no outcome of the WIPO work in that area can be excluded, including the development of international instruments. They have also underscored that WIPO work should not prejudice developments in other forums.

5. More recent sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee have examined draft principles and objectives[1] that could shape specific instruments for traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. Such an approach to protection could recognize, among other things, collective interests in traditional know-how and expressions of traditional cultures that are characteristic of a distinct cultural identity. The interests would be respected for as long as a traditional community continues to be associated with the knowledge or cultural expressions.

6. The drafts include compliance with the principle of free, prior and informed consent and the recognition of customary laws and practices. In line with the views of many indigenous and traditional communities, the draft provisions do not require the assertion of new exclusive property rights over traditional knowledge or cultural expressions, but accommodate that option should communities wish to take it up.

7. The drafts have not been adopted or endorsed by the Intergovernmental Committee and may be developed further. They draw upon a wide range of community, national and regional experiences, and have been developed over several years by and in consultation with member States, indigenous peoples and other traditional and cultural communities, civil society organizations and a range of other concerned parties. Earlier drafts of the objectives and principles were the subject of an open commenting process established by the Committee.

[1] See www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=9765 and www.wipo.int/tk/en/consultations/draft_provisions/comments.html.

8. The draft materials are being used as reference in a range of national, regional and international policy discussions and standard-setting processes. Details of the background to these documents and the wide range of materials and perspectives that shaped them can be found on the WIPO website (www.wipo.int/tk/en/index.html).

9. While the draft objectives and principles have no formal status, they illustrate some of the perspectives and approaches that are guiding work in the area, and could suggest possible frameworks for the protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions against misappropriation and misuse.

10. There are two distinct sets of draft objectives and principles: the first deals with traditional cultural expressions ("expressions of folklore"), the second with traditional knowledge as such. The distinction reflects the choice made in many cases to address the specific policy and legal questions raised by the two areas. The draft materials are prepared, however, in the understanding that for many communities the areas are closely related — even integral — aspects of respect for and protection of their cultural and intellectual heritage. The two sets of draft objectives and principles are therefore complementary. Some jurisdictions protect both traditional cultural expressions and traditional knowledge in a single instrument, while others use a range of laws and instruments to address the two areas (or specific aspects of them) distinctly.

11. The objectives and principles contained in the draft instruments will be discussed again by the Intergovernmental Committee at its ninth session from 24 to 28 April 2006.

12. All working documents, comments, papers, studies, databases, questionnaires and other material prepared for consideration by the Intergovernmental Committee, as well as comprehensive reports of its sessions, are available in English, French and Spanish on the WIPO website.

Participation of indigenous peoples and local communities

13. The member States of WIPO have repeatedly stressed the priority of participation of the Forum and indigenous representatives in the sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee. There is continuing exploration and consultation on options and modalities for facilitating and generally improving the participation of indigenous peoples in WIPO activities. The practical experience and guidance of the Forum and its members provide invaluable input to achieving that goal. Member States of WIPO have expressed their unanimous support for directly involving as much as possible representatives of indigenous and local communities in the work of the Committee.

14. In that regard, the following of practical steps have already been undertaken:

(a) A fast-track accreditation procedure for all non-governmental organizations has been in place since the first session of the Intergovernmental Committee in April 2001. More than 120 non-governmental organizations have received accreditation, the majority representing indigenous peoples. No applicant has been denied accreditation (see www.wipo.int/tk/en/igc/index.html);

(b) The General Assembly of WIPO has extended a formal invitation to the Forum to take part in the sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee, and many participants have welcomed its active participation;

(c) A number of member States have adopted the practice of funding the participation of representatives of indigenous and local communities in the sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee;

(d) The funds provided by WIPO to support the participation of member States that are developing countries have been used in some cases by such countries to support the participation of leaders of their indigenous or local communities;

(e) Consultations and workshops at the national and regional levels and other forums aimed at developing focused input for the Intergovernmental Committee have included representatives of the Forum and indigenous and local communities as speakers and participants;

(f) The WIPO website provides for written contributions by accredited non-governmental organizations on the issues before the Intergovernmental Committee;

(g) Specific briefings and consultations for representatives of non-governmental organizations, particularly representatives of indigenous and local communities, are also undertaken within the framework of meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee;

(h) The WIPO secretariat has continued its practice of consulting with interested representatives of indigenous and local communities on draft documents and other material being developed for the Intergovernmental Committee, as well as related capacity-building and informational documents, including a series of case studies and a distance learning course contributed to by indigenous experts;

(i) The General Assembly of WIPO has recently established a voluntary fund for accredited indigenous and local communities, devised to facilitate the participation in sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee of representatives of indigenous and local communities, and other customary holders or custodians of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions, already accredited to the Committee. The extent of support that the voluntary fund can provide depends on the resources donated to it. Any potential donors are encouraged to contact the WIPO secretariat for further information. Even modest contributions will contribute to the success of the fund (see www.wipo.int/tk/en/ngoparticipation/voluntary_fund/index.html);

(j) The Intergovernmental Committee decided in November 2004 that its future sessions should be preceded by panel presentations chaired by a representative of an indigenous or local community. Such a panel, on the theme "Indigenous and local communities' concerns and experiences in promoting, sustaining and safeguarding their traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and genetic resources", was held at the commencement of the eighth session of the Committee from 6 to 10 June 2005. The panel comprised seven participants of indigenous and local communities from Canada, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Sweden, Ukraine and Zambia, whose participation was funded by WIPO. The participant from Canada was Wilton Littlechild, a member of the Forum. A similar panel will be held before the ninth session of the Committee from 24 to 28 April 2006.

Consultations and studies on customary laws and intellectual property

15. WIPO has initiated a process of study and consultation on two related questions: the role of customary laws and protocols of indigenous and local communities in relation to their traditional knowledge, genetic resources and cultural expressions, and the relationship of customary laws and protocols with the intellectual property system. Work builds on an extensive background of consultation and reflection on the role of customary laws and protocols, both within the Intergovernmental Committee and in a broader WIPO dialogue with indigenous communities, such as the fact-finding consultations in the late 1990s that set the direction of WIPO work in the area. As noted above, the draft provisions for the protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions already take account of the role of customary law, the study process would complement those developments. The full background is described in an issues paper[7] drafted to facilitate further consultations on the question.

16. Several mechanisms have been put in place to encourage and facilitate participation by indigenous peoples and local communities. Interested parties are invited to submit papers, including commentaries, case studies and analysis dealing with the relationship between customary law and protocols and (a) the protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions against misuse and misappropriation, or (b) intellectual property law in general and the administration and development of the intellectual property system. The papers may respond to a draft background and issues paper that has been prepared,[7] but need not. A set of suggested guidelines[8] has been prepared to stimulate papers (see also www.wipo.int/tk/en/consultations/customary_law/index.html).

Access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing

17. Concerning genetic resources, WIPO's work does not relate to the protection of genetic resources as such. Genetic resources (such as microbes or plants) are physical resources not intellectual property, even though they are often integrally associated with traditional knowledge and practices. WIPO does, however, deal with intellectual property issues relating to genetic resources (e.g. a biotech invention derived from a genetic resource). Because of the close association of genetic resources with traditional knowledge, some national biodiversity laws protect both. A "disclosure of origin" requirement in patent applications is regarded by many States and others as an instrument to ensure the traceability of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and to support compliance with free, prior and informed consent and fair and equitable benefit-sharing, in furtherance inter alia of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Others call for alternative approaches to strengthening the link between equitable benefit-sharing and the intellectual property system. Discussions on those issues continue in WIPO and in other forums. WIPO cooperates closely with the secretariat of the Convention on

[7] See http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/consultations/customary_law/issues.pdf.

[8] See www.wipo.int/tk/en/consultations/customary_law/guidelines.pdf.

Biological Diversity in relation to those questions and has prepared technical studies at its request [4]

Capacity-building

18. The programme of activities in the area of capacity-building includes a range of complementary practical activities, such as legislative assistance, awareness-raising and training as well as cooperation with a broad spectrum of national, regional and international initiatives. Recent examples include a subregional meeting in Tashkent in which the Forum was invited to participate by WIPO and a workshop for indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women, of Panama, held in Panama City in October 2005.

Contribution of expertise and experience by the Permanent Forum

19. The Forum has been represented at sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee and at other national and regional events organized by WIPO. In 2002, the General Assembly of WIPO decided by consensus to extend a specific invitation to the Forum to take part in sessions of the Committee. The Forum has played a prominent role in Committee discussions on the enhancement of indigenous participation in the Committee, and contributed in particular to the development of the proposal for a WIPO voluntary fund for indigenous and local communities, which has now been established. The Forum has also taken part in two WIPO regional conferences on the protection of traditional knowledge and cultural experiences. WIPO was, for example, very pleased that the Forum accepted its invitation to participate in a subregional meeting on traditional knowledge, cultural experiences and genetic resources held in Tashkent from 18 to 20 October 2005.

20. WIPO, the Forum and its secretariat have an excellent working relationship. At the most recent session of the Intergovernmental Committee, the representative of the Forum stated that it wished to maintain an important collaborative partnership with WIPO. WIPO believes that the Forum has already played a significant role in contributing expertise and experience to its activities and appreciates the mutual cooperation.

Recent publications

21. The following studies[5] may be of interest to the Forum:

- Booklets on intellectual property and traditional cultural expressions/folklore and on intellectual property and traditional knowledge
- Case studies on intellectual property and traditional cultural expressions, by Terri Janke (Australia)

[4] For more information, see www.wipo.int/tk/en/genetic/ and www.wipo.int/tk/en/genetic/proposals/index.html.

[5] Available upon request from the WIPO secretariat and at www.wipo.int/tk/en/publications/index.html.

- National experiences with the protection of expressions of folklore/traditional cultural expressions, by Valsala Kutty (India)
- Consolidated analysis of the legal protection of traditional cultural expressions/expressions of folklore
- Study on the role of intellectual property rights in the sharing of benefits arising from the use of biological resources and associated traditional knowledge

22. A collection of the presentations made by participants in the indigenous panels at past and upcoming sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee will also be published.

Cooperation with other organizations and agencies

23. As requested by member States and as recommended by the Forum, WIPO continues to cooperate with other organizations and agencies on issues of concern to the Forum and to ensure that its work on recognition and protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions is complementary to and supportive of their work. They include the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization, the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. WIPO has also coordinated with the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and a range of regional bodies and non-governmental organizations.

II. Other significant information

24. WIPO participated actively in a technical workshop on indigenous traditional knowledge convened by the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, organized by the secretariat of the Forum and hosted by the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). WIPO also funded the participation of an indigenous expert from Papua New Guinea. WIPO provided a written information note for the workshop, available at www.wipo.int/tk/en/cooperation/documents/indigenous_tk.pdf.

III. Information and suggestions regarding the special theme of the fifth session

25. As noted in the presentations made by the indigenous experts at the workshop organized by the Inter-Agency Support Group, the secretariat of the Forum and UNICEF in Panama City in September 2005, indigenous traditional knowledge not only sustains indigenous and local communities in their daily lives but is also a key element of their identities and self-determination. Such knowledge of indigenous

communities, which reflects their holistic worldviews, also contributes to the world's cultural and biological diversity and is a source of cultural and economic wealth for the communities and for humanity as a whole. Indigenous knowledge systems are, however, subject to a variety of threats. In response, numerous practical, legislative and policy initiatives are under way at the community, national, regional and international levels to enhance the protection of indigenous traditional knowledge. However, as stressed by the indigenous experts who took part in the Panama workshop, respect for indigenous peoples' rights, and in particular their human rights, is at the heart of their concerns about the preservation, promotion and protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. Due consideration of those concerns and perspectives, while preserving, promoting and protecting the traditional knowledge and cultural expressions of indigenous communities will have a direct bearing on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

IV. Conferences and meetings in 2006

26. Events will include the ninth session of the Intergovernmental Committee to be held in Geneva from 24 to 28 April 2006, followed by the tenth session tentatively scheduled for November or December 2006 (subject to confirmation).